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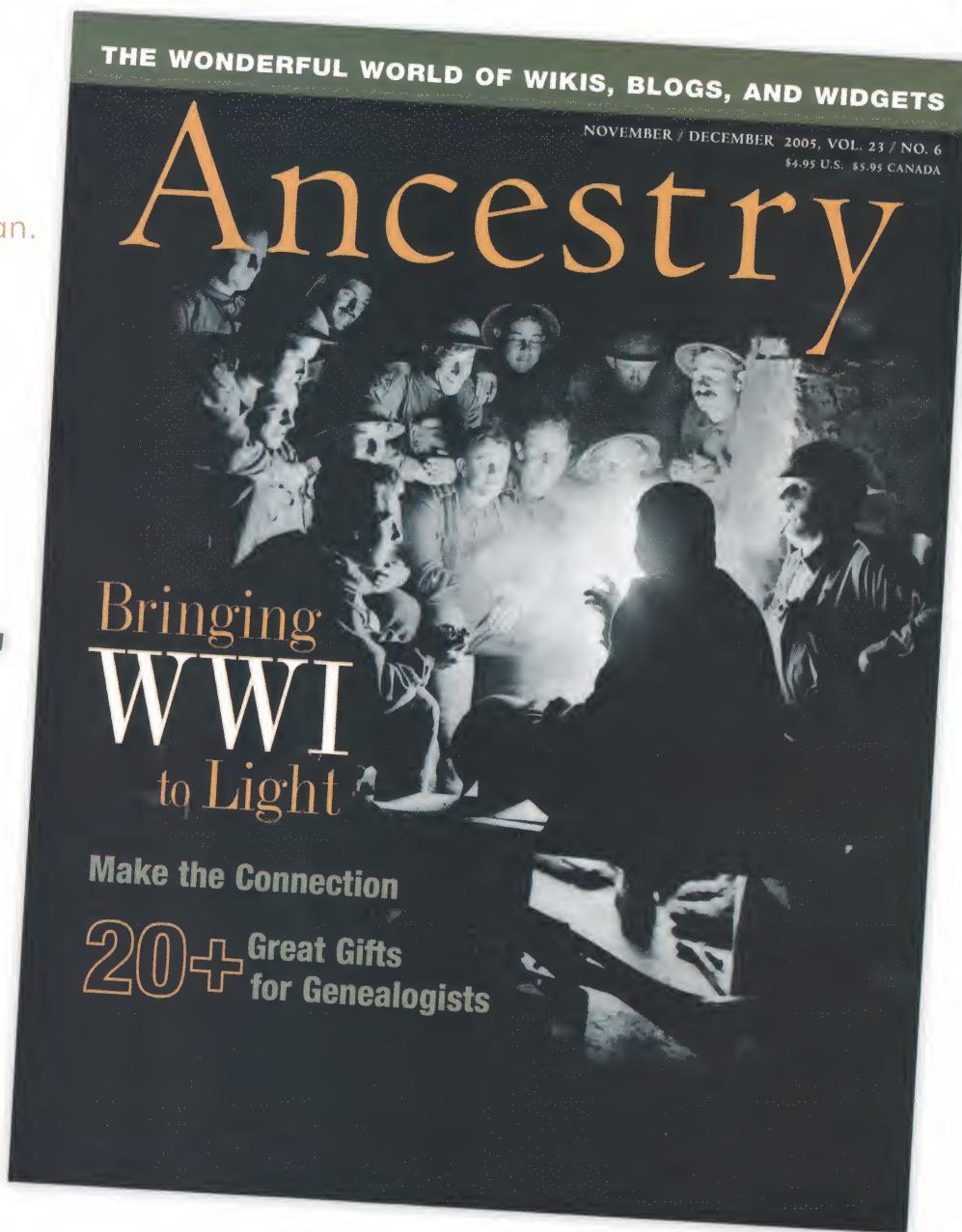
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Cover photograph: Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot leafs through her family album. Image courtesy of PBS.

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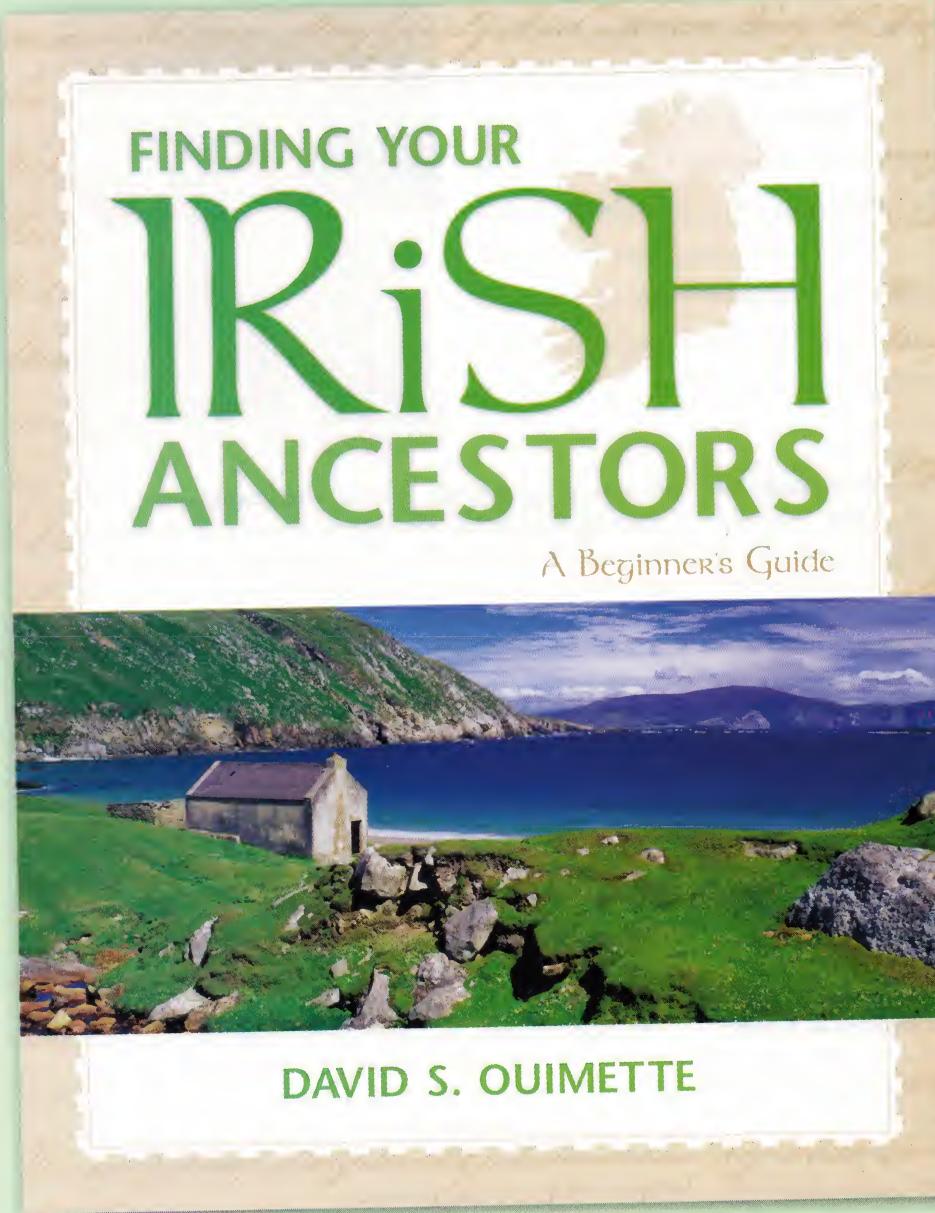
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# Editor's Note

# H

uman beings look separate because you see them walking about separately. But then we are so made that we can see only the present moment. If we could see the past, then of course it would look different. For there was a time when every man was part of his mother, and (earlier still) part of his father as well, and when they were part of his grandparents. If you could see humanity spread through time, as God sees it, it would look like one single growing thing—rather like a very complicated tree. Every individual would appear connected with every other. —C. S. Lewis

I think that family historians, more than most, are mindful of the strong ties that bind family members together. Yet, every single day the stories of millions of lives are forever lost. And it's not just the stories of the distant generations that are fading fast.

I was reminded of the fragile nature of family lore not long ago when my grandniece Kristin came to town. She is a lawyer and came for a short visit while she was involved in a trial in Chicago.

Because she grew up on the East Coast, Kristin and I had never before had an opportunity to get to know one another. In the course of the conversation, we talked about my father who had also been a lawyer, and we wondered what he would have thought of his great-granddaughter following the same career path that he had chosen.

During her visit, Kristin eagerly went through a book of photos and memorabilia that I'd put together about my father—he died before any of my five siblings or I really got to know him. Only a few mementos and photos, his college yearbooks, and my one surviving brother's faint memories of him are all we have left of our dad.

While she was here, I shared with Kristin letters written by my grandfather, my mother, and my brother (Kristin's grandfather), and even a letter that Kristin's own mother had written to me when she was expecting this lovely young woman—expressing her opinion that she was going to have a boy. The strong kicking going on inside of Kristin's mom was all she had to go on in the days before the gender of a baby could be known prior to birth.

As we went through the notebooks that I've created

for each of my siblings, parents, and grandparents, even I was surprised by the vast number of letters I saved from the five generations since my grandfather's era. The aunt who raised me probably instilled the practice in me. On the day she was married, my aunt moved thousands of miles away from her widowed father and her siblings, just as I did on the day I was married. Both her children and my children grew up without grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins nearby to help celebrate holidays and special occasions. Instead, we, then and now, cherish letters and photos that many families don't have. They are mere fragments of lives but they provide a glimpse of the enduring ties that bind.

We want to remember the family that bequeathed to us its physical traits, stories, works, and dreams. It's the same family that gave us our first thoughts and the traditions that we cherish today.

Yet each day more and more of the stories of our families' lives are lost forever. That's why we need to make every effort today to preserve the stories and memories of our living connections to our pasts—while they're still around to tell them. For we are indeed connected to one another in ways we can not see.



Loretto (Lou) Dennis Szucs

Loretto (Lou) Dennis Szucs  
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## Readers Respond: How have you shared your family's story?

**Looking for a good way to get involved? Try one of the following options:**

### 1 Recognize a Good Story

The International Society of Family History Writers and Editors (ISFHWE) is sponsoring its annual writing contest. The contest is open to all ISFHWE members—published and unpublished—and includes categories for newspaper columns, articles, genealogy research stories, and unpublished material. Winners receive cash prizes and possible publication in *Ancestry Magazine*. Entry deadline is 1 March 2006. Complete rules and information are available at <[www.rootsweb.com/~cgc](http://www.rootsweb.com/~cgc)>.



On Father's Day, I presented my father-in-law a framed copy of the passenger list showing his great-grandparents' arrival into America through Castle Garden in New York in 1887. What made this even more special was the inclusion of a cigarette card (similar to bubble-gum baseball cards) I found on eBay depicting the sea captain of the exact ship my father-in-law's great-grandparents traveled on in 1887.

Amber L. G. Tauscher

chain letter wasn't so welcome and accepted by my family. It has even prompted us to schedule a first-ever family reunion and to have two younger generations join the family chain letter. Hopefully these additions will keep the family stories rolling for years to come.

Sherri Camperchioli

I asked my cousin to bring over family documents and anything else that I could copy on a copy machine so I could make a memory quilt for him. He brought over three old Italian documents, my grandmother's birth record from 1890, my grandfather's gun registration, and my grandfather's military documents. Neither of us could read Italian and my curiosity got the best of me. Not only did I create a quilt for my cousin and another one for my father from these artifacts, I also developed a strong interest in genealogy.

Nancy Colby

### 2 Opportunity Knocks

*Ancestry Magazine* wants your story. Each issue features opportunities for new and seasoned writers to contribute breakthroughs and epiphanies as well as family heritage recipes and more. Contact [editoram@ancestry.com](mailto:editoram@ancestry.com) for a complete list of opportunities as well as submission guidelines and other important information.

### 3 What Do You Think?

Let us know your thoughts on family history by taking the weekly polls at *Ancestry.com*. Visit <[www.ancestry.com/community](http://www.ancestry.com/community)> (*Ancestry.com* membership not required to participate) and let your voice be heard today.

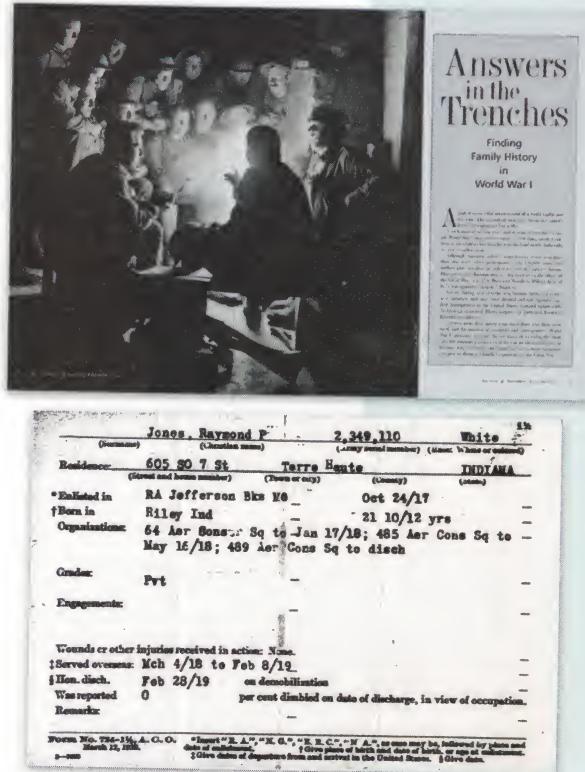
In the process of collecting tales and photos for a story about my fourth great-grandfather, I was often in awe at the tremendous resources available to me. I discovered that the grandfather in question had a second wife whom he married at age eighty-seven, and I met relatives I didn't know about before. The story has taken on a life of its own as I've shared it with my family, with students at my granddaughter's school, and with a local historical society.

Marty Cottrill

### Next issue: Why did they leave?

Give us the tales you uncovered of how, when, where, and why your ancestors set off for new lands. Send your stories and contact information to [editoram@ancestry.com](mailto:editoram@ancestry.com).

# Letters



Editor:

To add to Echo King's excellent article ("Searching the Home Front," *Ancestry Magazine*, November/December 2005) and her list of various sources for finding information on a World War I veteran, allow me to add one more option:

Following the war, the Army Adjutant General abstracted each soldier's, including Army nurses, service onto a 3"x 5" card and sent these cards to each soldier's state Adjutant General. For enlisted soldiers, this card is Form No. 724-11/2, A.G.O. There is a similar card for officers. The Navy Department did something similar for sailors and Marines. Generally these cards are held either by the state Adjutant General offices or in state archives.

As 80 percent of the WWI Army records were lost in the fire at the National Personnel Records Center, these A.G.O. service cards provide an excellent alternate source of information on World War I soldiers.

Thomas P. Jones  
Indianapolis, IN

## Now—at Ancestry.com

### New York Passenger Lists

Ancestry.com has expanded its New York Passenger List database to include the over 4.5 million people who passed through New York ports from 1935 to 1938 giving subscribers a greater opportunity of finding their ancestors. Now, the names of more than 65 percent of the 25 million people who passed through the ports of New York from 1830 to 1950 are searchable on Ancestry.com. Additionally, facts about citizens who traveled abroad and access to images of more than six hundred passenger ships on which immigrants traveled are also available.

### New Memberships

New pricing and packaging options make subscriptions at Ancestry.com easier than ever, allowing subscribers to select new, all-inclusive packages (existing subscribers may choose to retain their original membership types).

Current subscribers may review their subscription and find more information about subscription options at the "My Account" tab on Ancestry.com (<www.ancestry.com/myancestry/myaccount>) or by calling (800) 958-9127. Non-subscribers can select the **Subscribe** link from Ancestry.com or call (800) ANCESTRY to learn more about the new memberships.

### Family History for Future Family Historians

In conjunction with the February PBS series *African American Lives* (see page 18) and the one hundredth anniversary of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Ancestry.com is reaching out with a one-of-a-kind family history education program.

Beginning in February and continuing throughout 2006, all Boys and Girls Clubs of America—more than 3,700 clubs—will have complimentary

access to a specially designed Ancestry.com site where children can experience family history through activities designed specifically for them—encouraging people of all ages to learn more about family history.



# Things to Do

January February 2006

**Swear you'll get it done.** Jot down a family history resolution for 2006 and post it as a motivator of your plans.

**Express your sentiment.** Send a letter to your love, or write one and stash it away. Consider it an inside look into your life and relationship for the next generation to one day discover.

**Appreciate folk art.** Visit the Folk Art Society of America <[www.folkart.org](http://www.folkart.org)> for a list of folk art exhibits and events near you.

**Welcome the Chinese New Year.** Celebrate tradition with family and friends during the Chinese New Year, annually the first new moon following the winter solstice—for 2006, that's January 29.

**Share your day.** Turn a tape or video recorder on your own life and document the average, the exciting, and even the mundane.

**Relish a family connection.** Pass stories and time with family—activities that will make anyone's day.

# Family History on Your Lunch Hour

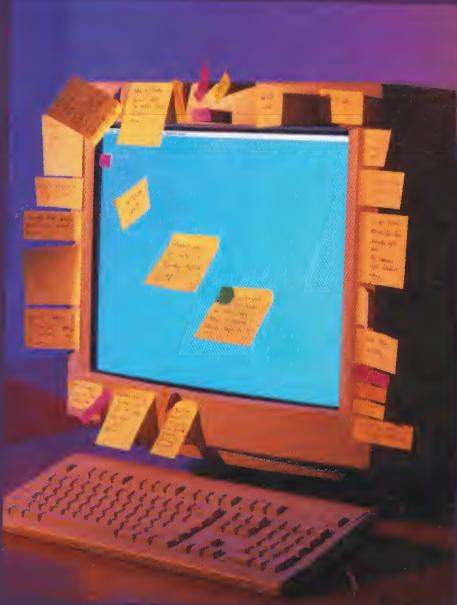
**Learn something new**—Attend a lunchtime history lesson. Everything from history discussions to walking tours are available during the lunch hour. Some events are free, some come at a slight cost, but almost every historical offering can give you better insight into the culture in which your ancestors lived.

To find a lunchtime history-related event near you, check with your local historical society and be prepared to make some choices: certain societies, like the Indiana Historical Society, have a full schedule of events at lunch. Also check local colleges, universities, and libraries for their events calendars. You may just find a tasty, and historical, treat and a new way to spend an hour of your busy day.



## Get Organized

*Stop wading through mountains of files on your computer's hard drive and celebrate February 9 the way it was meant to be—as Clean Out Your Computer Day.*



This little-known, relatively-recent addition to the traditional holiday lineup may not afford you a day off from work, but it will give you an excuse to go through your electronic family history files. Take a couple of hours and decide what to keep, what to toss, and what to archive to CD or DVD. Finally create those folders that help you organize your family history information in a manner that makes sense to you—under surname, for example, like Jones Family; by relationship, like Great-Grandparents; or with category labels like Photos or Oral Histories. You, your computer, and anyone with whom you share your research will be glad you did.

# Getting Out



## Places with History

Want an insider's view of history? Consider heading to one of the over 79,000 registered historic places in the United States.

You won't find just any old building on the National Register of Historic Places—structures have to earn their titles. So how do they do it? By being significant to the history of America.

Places can be considered historically significant either via an association with an event; with a specific aspect of American culture; or through their architectural style, archaeology, or construction. Any qualifying location—from a neighborhood or district to a cemetery or a house—is eligible, provided it is first nominated by a State Historic Preservation officer.

Historic places are located throughout the country, although they aren't required to be open to the public. To find a list of historic places, search by location at <[www.nr.nps.gov/nrloc1.htm](http://www.nr.nps.gov/nrloc1.htm)>. Before visiting, check with a local historical society or visitor's bureau to determine if the historic property is open to the public.

## Events: January – February 2006

### Slavery in New York Exhibition

New York Historical Society

New York City, NY

Through 5 March 2006

<[www.nyhistory.org](http://www.nyhistory.org)>

First of two exhibitions—this one spans the period from the 1600s to 1827. Lectures, debates, films, performances, and walking tours as well as exhibits.

### Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy

Utah Genealogical Association

Salt Lake City, UT

9–13 January 2006

<[www.infouga.org](http://www.infouga.org)>

Five days of family history and genealogy classes spanning nine courses of study and twenty hours of instruction.

### If These Walls Could Talk

Minnesota History Center

St. Paul, MN

14 January 2006

<<http://events.mnhs.org/media/Kits/events/1541/index.cfm>>

A single house in the Railroad Island neighborhood shows the daily lives of past neighborhood residents through the years.

### Getting Organized for Family History

NARA

Philadelphia, PA

18 January 2006

<[www.archives.gov/midatlantic/public/workshops.html](http://www.archives.gov/midatlantic/public/workshops.html)>

Learn strategies for researching family history including preparing family group sheets, developing a research plan, and maintaining records.

### Toronto Celebrates Lunar New Year 2006

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

27–29 January 2006

<[www.torontocelebrates.com](http://www.torontocelebrates.com)>

Toronto's Chinese New Year celebration—includes other Asian cultures that also celebrate a lunar new year.

### St. Louis Genealogical Society Open House

St. Louis Genealogical Society

St. Louis, MO

29 January 2006

<[www.stlgs.org/openHouse.shtml](http://www.stlgs.org/openHouse.shtml)>

Open house featuring opportunities to talk with experienced genealogists, examine family history software, and learn about the society's projects.

### African American Lives

PBS

February 2006 (see PBS.org for specific dates and times)

<[www.pbs.org/aboutpbs/news/20050713\\_africanamericanlives.html](http://www.pbs.org/aboutpbs/news/20050713_africanamericanlives.html)>

Four-hour documentary tracing the ancestry of some of today's most accomplished African Americans. See page 18 for more information.

### 11th Annual Flight to Freedom African American Heritage Celebration

Fort Mose Historical Society and Florida Park Service

Fort Mose, FL

5 February 2006

<[www.myflorida.com/myflorida/governorsoffice/black\\_history/feb\\_dates.html](http://www.myflorida.com/myflorida/governorsoffice/black_history/feb_dates.html)>

Celebration of African arts, crafts, food, heritage, and entertainment in Florida.

### Biscuits, Gumbo, Sweet Tea, and Bourbon Balls: Southern Food and Drink in History, Literature and Film

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Natchez, MS

23–26 February 2006

<[www.colin.edu/nlcc/default.htm](http://www.colin.edu/nlcc/default.htm)>

Considered Mississippi's most significant conference devoted to culture, history, and literature.

### Life in the Pacific of the 1700s: The Cook/Forster Collection of the George August University of Göttingen

Honolulu Academy of Arts

Honolulu, HI

23 February–14 May 2006

<[www.honoluluacademy.org/exh/upcoming.htm](http://www.honoluluacademy.org/exh/upcoming.htm)>

Exhibition of cultural objects of the Pacific region as collected by Captain James Cook between 1728 and 1779. Exhibit showcases both life and culture of the region during the eighteenth century.

### Preserving Family History

Utah Humanities Council

St. George, UT

24 February 2006

<[www.utahhumanities.org/calendar/wc022006.htm](http://www.utahhumanities.org/calendar/wc022006.htm)>

The ins and outs of oral history—learn how to conduct, capture, and use oral history interviews.

# Extolling Famous Love

- TIME AND THE ART OF LOVE LETTERS

—Tana Pedersen Lord



Sometime between 1528 and 1533 (exact date unknown)

*My mistress and friend . . . the longer the days are the farther off is the sun, and yet the more fierce. So it is with our love, for by absence we are parted, yet nevertheless it keeps its fervour; at least on my side, and I hope on yours also . . . .*

Your loyal servant and friend

H. Rex

—Henry VIII, King of England, to his second wife, Anne Boleyn. Within a few years of this letter, Anne was executed after being falsely accused of treason, incest, and adultery.

3 April 1796

*My one and only Josephine, apart from you there is no joy; away from you, the world is a desert where I am alone and cannot open my heart. You have taken more than my soul; you are the one thought of my life.*

Bonaparte

—Napoleon Bonaparte, famous general and Emperor of France, to his wife, Joséphine de Beauharnais, written just weeks after their wedding.

19 September 1915

My noble, incomparable Edith,

*You have the greatest soul, the noblest nature, the sweetest, most loving heart I have ever known, and my love, my reverence, my admiration for you; you have increased in one evening as I should have thought only a lifetime of intimate, loving association could have increased them.*

—U.S. President Woodrow Wilson to his future wife, Edith Bolling Galt. The two were married three months following this letter—while Wilson held the office of president.

23 December 1782

My dearest Friend,

*I look back to the early days of our acquaintance; and friendship, as to the days of love and innocence; and with an undescribable pleasure I have seen near a score of years roll over our Heads, with an affection heightened and improved by time.*

—Abigail Smith Adams to her husband, John Adams. Years later, Adams became the 2nd president of the United States.

12 May 1869

Livy,

*Out of the depths of my happy heart wells a great tide of love and prayer for this priceless treasure that is confided to my life-long keeping.*

*You cannot see its intangible waves as they flow towards you, darling, but in these lines you will hear, as it were, the distant beating of the surf.*

—Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as American writer and humorist, Mark Twain, to his future wife, Olivia Langdon.

4 March 1983

Dear First Lady

*I more than love you, I'm not whole without you. You are life itself to me. When you are gone I'm waiting for you to return so I can start living again.*

I love you

Your Grateful Husband

—Ronald Reagan, actor, governor of California, and 40th president of the United States, to his wife, Nancy, on their 31st anniversary.



# On 2 February...

at the Staten Island Zoo, onlookers await a forecasting fur-ball named Staten Island Chuck. In Wiarton, Ontario, albino wood-chuck Wiarton Willie greets his fans. In Lilburn, Georgia, an antique farm bell summons General Beauregard Lee to illuminate the coming spring.

And if you wake up early each Groundhog Day to hear what one of these, or any other vermin, has to say about the coming of spring, you'll be interested to know that traditions, too, have "family trees" just like people.

All Groundhog Day traditions, for example, have a common lineage—Punxsutawney Phil, "Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, and Weather Prophet Extraordinary." In 1886, Phil, undisputedly the first and most popular of the fuzzy weathermen, made his first "official" forecast: an early spring. How popular is Phil? In recent years, revelers in Punxsutawney have caused the small Pennsylvania town's population to boom to over 30,000 on Groundhog Day.

Phil, or "Br'er Groundhog," as he was once called, also has roots. The notion that groundhogs could predict the weather came to Pennsylvania with the Germans, who picked it up from the Romans. And Groundhog Day owes as much to the Christian holiday Candlemas and early pagan beliefs about midwinter as it does to the Romans, the Germans, or even the old world hedgehogs and bears who were Phil's hibernating progenitors.

So this February, while preparing for six more weeks of winter (Phil has predicted a longer winter 87 percent of the time), stop tracing your family history and start tracking your family traditions instead. You'll find that, like the traditions surrounding Groundhog Day, your traditions are part of a rich and vibrant tree, connecting you to your ancestors in ways you may have never imagined.

—Matthew Rayback

## Inspiring Love

Ready to write your own love letter but not sure where to start? Try one of the following helpful websites:

If you need help writing a love letter, or just want to "borrow" great content from others, you'll find inspiration through hundreds of love letters and get tips for writing your own romantic messages at <<http://library.lovingyou.com/letters>>.

Scared by paper and pen? Compose an e-mail love letter and have it automatically sent to your sweetheart. At <[www.hugkiss.com/platinum/loveletter.html](http://www.hugkiss.com/platinum/loveletter.html)>, you'll be able to write your own thoughts or choose from funny or romantic pre-written sentiments.

And finally, if you really want to get serious about writing perfect correspondence, you can find out everything Emily Post has to say about the art and etiquette of letter-writing at <[www.bartleby.com/95/28.html](http://www.bartleby.com/95/28.html)>.



**M**y grandmother's wheat bread is legendary—not only for its taste but for the love baked into every morsel.

As the eldest granddaughter, I was afforded numerous opportunities to assist Grandma in her bread-making endeavors. Grandma always seemed excited to spend time with me and pleased that I wanted to help bake.

Grandma gave me the "special job" of pouring in the wheat flour as she, with her strong arms, moved the wooden spoon around the huge bowl. She would tell me stories about her ancestors—particularly her grandmother Ann Catherine (Jarvis) Milne. I still remember the excitement I felt hearing the tales about Great-Great-Grandma Milne's trek across the plains in a handcart company and her adventures years later when she—at over one hundred years old—was crowned Queen of the Old Folks' Committee and made an appearance as such on the *Colgate Comedy Hour* with Donald O'Connor.

Each time we baked, I would ask for whom we were making bread, and Grandma would recite a list. "Molly Granger could certainly use some extra loaves today," she would say. "She has three young ones and very little income. Perhaps these loaves will save her a bit of money."

Grandma's charitable heart extended to me as well. She would allow me to snitch pieces of dough if the bread pans were "too full" to bake. Plus, Grandma's "poor" pouring skills allowed me more mouthfuls of her delicious, slippery dough. And Grandma would always let me bake my own tiny loaves of bread in tuna fish cans that she saved and washed for that purpose—as personal souvenirs of the day's events.

My grandmother shared more with me than just these loaves of whole wheat bread: she also shared her love. I can't eat a slice of wheat bread today without thinking of Grandma and our special moments baking together.

—Adele Maurine Marcum

## "Foolproof" Whole Wheat Bread

2 Tbsp. dry yeast  
1/2 cup warm water  
5 cups hot tap water  
2 Tbsp. salt  
2/3 cup oil  
2/3 cup honey or raw sugar  
12 cups whole wheat flour  
Four medium loaf pans  
Additional oil for hands and pans

Dissolve yeast in 1/2 cup warm water.

Combine hot tap water and 7 cups flour and blend. Add salt, oil, and honey. Mix until well blended.

Add 1 cup flour and yeast/water mixture to dough and blend thoroughly. Add 3–4 cups additional flour and knead dough for 10 minutes until the dough is the consistency of cookie dough.

Oil hands and shape the dough into four loaves, placing each in an oiled loaf pan. Cover pans with a dampened tea towel or plastic wrap and let the loaves rise until doubled.

Bake in 350° oven for 45 minutes. Remove loaves from pans and place on a wire rack to cool.

Have a heritage recipe you'd like to share with the readers of *Ancestry Magazine*? Send the story (250 words max) and the detailed recipe via e-mail to <[editoram@ancestry.com](mailto:editoram@ancestry.com)> for publication consideration.

# Some of the greatest stories are sitting in our own family trees.

We hear it over and over again—names and dates are nice but it's the stories that really make up our families. How else would we know that Aunt Lilly was age two before she cut her first tooth? Or that Grandpa was a great painter in his day?

Collecting stories now, while our family's storytellers are still around to tell them, is more important than ever. But how you choose to collect the stories and what you do with the stories you gather is completely up to you—and the storyteller.

Not sure you're ready to decide how to capture your family's stories? The following books and products will give you a number of options for collecting and sharing, and they may even provide you with a little inspiration to help you get set—and go.

## StoryCorps StoryKit

Forget handwriting—get their stories in their own words by saving their own words. Just planning to interview one or two family members? Rent a StoryCorps StoryKit. For \$100 (plus \$500 deposit), you get a week with an at-home professional recording kit—including instructions and suggestions for conducting do-it-yourself interviews. Kits contain a MiniDisc recorder, two MiniDiscs, a professional-quality microphone, studio-grade headphones, and a StoryKit User's Guide.

<[www.storycorps.net/participate/do-it-yourself\\_guide/rent\\_a\\_storykit](http://www.storycorps.net/participate/do-it-yourself_guide/rent_a_storykit)>

## Sony Hi-MD Walkman Digital Music Player

If your plans include saving the words of every willing family member, consider purchasing your own digital recorder, like the Sony Hi-MD Walkman Digital Music Player. A music player? Yes, but this one also packs a Record option. You get portability,

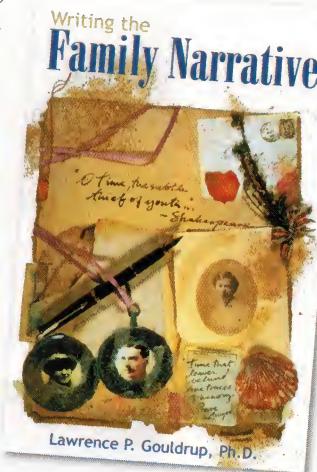


flexibility, ease of operation, and the added bonus of being able to listen to tunes when you're not recording conversations. The Sony Hi-MD records on MiniDiscs, but the unit can be hooked up with a USB connection to transfer MiniDisc recordings directly onto your home computer. The Hi-MD comes in a variety of models that can record up to forty-five hours of talk, depending on the make, memory, and mode chosen. Prices start at \$199.95.

<[www.sonystyle.com](http://www.sonystyle.com)>

## Writing the Family Narrative

By Lawrence P. Gouldrup. Ancestry Publishing, 1998. 157 pages. Paperback. \$10.95. <<http://shops.ancestry.com>>



After collecting the records, tracking down elusive clues, and gradually building a picture of your family, you're ready to convert your dates and facts and anecdotes into a narrative masterpiece. *Writing the Family Narrative* by Lawrence P. Gouldrup offers a fast, readable guide that will help you do just that. Using rich and abundant examples, Gouldrup details all of the steps you need to create a tightly-crafted masterwork—and do your family and its traditions justice.



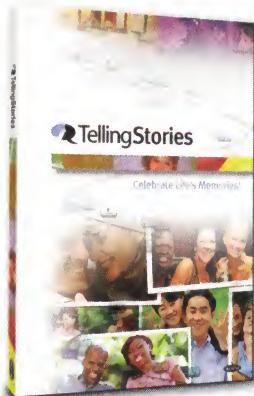
## The Elements of Style Illustrated

By William Strunk, Jr., E. B. White, and Maira Kalman. Penguin Press, 2005. Hardcover. 224 pages. <[www.penguinputnam.com](http://www.penguinputnam.com)>

Been a while since you've seen the inside of a schoolhouse? Brush up on the basics with a new take on an old favorite—*The Elements of Style Illustrated*. The text is the same as you recall from composition class, but illustrations, courtesy of children's book illustrator Maira Kalman, give the classic an updated, somewhat offbeat appeal. Use it as you would any other edition of *The Elements of Style*. You may even find that the images make the writing guide that much easier to embrace.

## Telling Stories

*Telling Stories*, Inc., 2004–05. <<http://shops.ancestry.com>>



If tackling a story-based project sans mentor leaves you speechless, consider a software program that walks you through the process instead. *Telling Stories* runs on Windows 2000/XP, and helps you plan and create your ancestor's story. Place an ancestor's life in the context of world events, develop a meaningful list of questions, search through lists of songs to

trigger memories. Combine your ancestor's unique story—or even your family's tall tales—into a multi-media presentation and burn it to CD to share with everyone in your family.

## The Stonecutter's Aria

By Carol Faenzi. Aperto Books, 2005. 316 pages. Paperback. \$16.95. <[www.thestonecuttersaria.com](http://www.thestonecuttersaria.com)>

## Isle of Canes

By Elizabeth Shown Mills. Ancestry Publishing, 2004. 583 pages. Hardbound. \$24.95. <<http://shops.ancestry.com>>

## Cane River

By Lalita Tademy. Warner Books, 2001. 560 pages. Hardbound. \$13.95. <[www.lalitatademy.com](http://www.lalitatademy.com)>

If you still need a little inspiration, try a good read—a published family history that takes the form of a novel. Part fiction, mostly family story and fact, these beautifully written novels capture the stories of generations rather than the vital facts of individuals.

*The Stonecutter's Aria*, by Carol Faenzi, features a main character who relies on a century of her Italian immigrant family's experiences to better understand herself.

The struggles of families along Louisiana's Cane River are memorialized in both *Isle of Canes*, by Elizabeth Shown Mills, and *Cane River*, by Lalita Tademy. Each novel focuses on a single family, weaving together the trials and triumphs of generations of women whose lives influence the generations after them.





# Is That Your Camera Ringing?

It's great having a camera built into something you already carry around with you, like a cell phone. But if the images you take leave something to be desired, consider the following tips:

1. Take a lousy picture? Delete it. It's okay if every photo you snap isn't a keeper.
2. Get ready for the close up. Camera phones tend not to do justice to landscape photography, but they're a great way to catch that once-in-a-lifetime expression on your subject's face.
3. Understand your limitations. While some camera phones offer cool features that let you get creative and artsy, most are best suited for point-and-shoot fun. Keep your old fashioned 35mm or trusty digital camera handy for the truly important shots of people, artifacts, and documents.



## Photo Corner

This 1928 photo taken in Nashville, Tennessee shows my father, T.H. Alexander Jr. (left) and his older brother, Dave Alexander. Their drink stand was located on Granny White Pike in Nashville.

As an interesting note, the boys' father, T.H. Alexander, was a popular columnist for *The Nashville Tennessean*—he even once wrote a column about this drink stand.

Submitted by Hudson Alexander  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Would you like to see a favorite photo of your ancestors in *Ancestry Magazine*? Now you can submit your photos to Photo Corner. Submissions should include your name, contact information, date of photo, who is pictured, and a short description. Please do not submit a photo of living persons without their written consent. Mail a quality duplicate (no photocopies or originals) to *Ancestry Magazine* 360 West 4800 North, Provo, UT 84604, or e-mail a 300 DPI TIFF scan to <[editoram@ancestry.com](mailto:editoram@ancestry.com)>. Submissions become the property of *Ancestry Magazine*. You will be contacted if your photo is chosen.





# Jumping Chasms

By Jeanie Croasmun

**I**t's frustrating when it happens—hitting a blip in our family history. When something, someone, somewhere just stops. Disappears. Almost like they never existed at all.

We get over it, tracing another family line, digging a little deeper for alternative sources of information. But when you're searching for African American ancestors, those little blips aren't always so maneuverable. And, when you can't find the right approach, they may even seem like giant chasms.

## Searching for Answers

Few of us have simple ancestries to trace. Ancestors may get a little lost in the translation of immigration—names get misspelled, languages misinterpreted, facts skewed or recorded creatively. Stories we heard in childhood make the family facts that we find as we grow older hard to confirm. Marriage, death, childbirth, divorce, cross-country migrations, and moves: any of these factors can play tricks on an ancestors' paper trail.

It's worse for the African American family historian, particularly when descended from slaves.

Actress Whoopi Goldberg discusses African American ancestry with Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in the upcoming PBS series *African American Lives*.

Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Oprah Winfrey

Whoopi Goldberg

Chris Tucker

Quincy Jones

Dr. Mae Jemison

Dr. Ben Carson

Bishop T.D. Jakes

Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot

Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., knows this fact all too well. As a recognized lecturer and author, and formerly one of *Time* magazine's "25 Most Influential Americans," even Gates's position in the limelight didn't help his family history research.

"I knew everything back to Jane Gates—back to 1819," says Gates. But that was all. Gates knew that his slave ancestors were freed early in the nineteenth century—1823 to be exact—and his family still held the documents to prove this. But before 1819, Gates's trail went cold—a common trait in searching for African American ancestry.

"A lot of [African Americans] before 1870 didn't have two names," says Gates, conceding that his own research trials weren't actually as dire as they probably could have been. "But finding anyone before 1750 is extremely impossible."

### Immovable Barriers

Genealogist Johni Cerny started researching African American ancestry two decades ago when music producer Quincy Jones was looking for help with his ancestry. And with more than twenty years of experience researching the topic under her belt today, Cerny has to agree with Gates—the lack of a last name *is* one of the biggest issues. But it's not the only one.

"The biggest challenge is that African Americans prior to the emancipation were personal property. Their names simply don't appear in public records like white Americans do," says Cerny. "In some cases, the trail ends at emancipation. You can't really place people with an owner. When you get to the eight and sixteen ancestor area [great- and great-great grandparents], those are the slave generations"—where the trail abruptly stops.

Even if an African American family historian happens to have an ancestor who was freed early (like Gates's ancestors) or who remained for generations with a single owner who kept birth and death records, tracing names beyond

American soil is impossible, frustrating, and disturbing. "Slaves were snagged in the jungle," says Cerny. "People didn't speak the tribal languages. Their language was taken from them, their culture was taken. There's no paper trail. That's the reality."

And that seemingly-paperless reality is exactly what Gates wanted to maneuver around.

### Progressive Movement

"We think of history under the terms of the great man and great woman of history or the mass movement of history which turns on nameless social forces," says Gates. "But [family history] is history that starts in your own living room."

Gates wanted to find a way to reach beyond America's shores, to give people, African Americans in particular, some sense of personal history. He enlisted the most powerful medium available—television—and a collection of African American stars, each of whom held an interest in finding his or her ancestors, but who knew little about his or her own personal history.

It's been thirty years since Alex Haley's book, *Roots*, and subsequent mini-series resulted in an eruption of interest in genealogy. And, in the time since, technology has changed the way family historians approach their research. Record collections have been digitized, research is stored on computers, new ways of searching, discovering, and connecting to far-removed family members are being developed all the time. But searching for an African ancestor—or any other ancestor—can still mean extracting information from oral histories, traditions, legends, and hunches. And even with all of the modern alternatives, researchers are still chasing sometimes-fleeting and frustrating trails of actual paper.

These facts encouraged Gates to enlist every resource available, including Cerny—"She knows more about dead black people than Saint Peter," laughs Gates—in his quest to find the ancestors of Oprah Winfrey, Whoopi Goldberg, Chris Tucker, Quincy Jones, Dr. Mae Jemison,



Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

**"Knowing about the past reveals more about the present. Knowing about your ancestors teaches you more about yourself."**

—Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.



"The first place I developed [an interest in family history] was from my family—my parents were always quite knowledgeable about their own life stories, and not just in a literal way of the facts, but about the mythology and the legends. But I was coming into this through an oral history lens.

"My mother, who is a physician. . . went to Cornell where she was not allowed to live in dorms or join a sorority, and worked as a domestic in the homes of professors. She always thought she'd go onto Cornell University Medical School. . . but the dean called her in. . . and told her that they decided not to admit her. It was devastating. He said it was because they admitted a Negro twenty-five years earlier and it hadn't worked out. So she found a way of making the contacts and applying late to Columbia medical school and was accepted. She was the only African American among the students there.

"I feel very, very happy to have had the opportunity to have this group of scientists, scholars, and genealogists gather material that my family would have never had without their help. They were able to tell me much more about my genealogy than I was ever able to find out on my own. They were able to find music of the Utica Industrial Institute group [that my paternal grandfather was associated with]. My family has never before had recordings of his music. It's just one of the ways in which [the series] enriched our understanding of our family."

*Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot  
Sociologist, author, and teacher  
Professor of Education at Harvard University*

Dr. Ben Carson, Bishop T.D. Jakes, and Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, as well as his own.

The hope was that discovering the slave-roots of modern-day actors and astronauts, preachers and entrepreneurs, medical professionals and teachers could show the impact that finding family can have on almost anyone.

### How It Happens

"It's not as difficult [to trace African American ancestries in the United States] today as it used to be twenty or twenty-five years ago when I first started with Quincy Jones and his ancestry," says Cerny, who handled the genealogical research end of Gates's resulting production, *African American Lives*, airing on PBS in February. "And doing as many lines as we did for these eight people, trying to find the slave ancestor, we really were able to develop a basic technique that should work for just about everybody."

Cerny's formula went like this: "Once you trace lines back to the 1870 census, you'll find that some of the time [the slaves] took the name of the slave owner. In this case we were lucky—a lot of people did," says Cerny. "You can look at the slave owners in 1850 and 1860 slave schedules and get an idea of the number of slaves owned and their ages." Cerny notes that this can oftentimes be unreliable—"but it's a start," she says.

The next step is to go to property records, land records, and deeds. For example, says Cerny, "In one of these families, Mae Jemison's, Robert Jemison was a very large plantation owner and owned a large number of slaves and [bore] a number of children. In deeds, we were able to find a list of the slaves deeded to each child. We were even able to find the name of [Mae's] ancestor, Adam Jemison, in the documents."

Cerny also searched estate records where, she says, prior to the 1850 to 1870 period, there is usually an estate inventory. "In a lot of the documents they grouped [slaves] by family—very good circumstantial evidence," says Cerny.

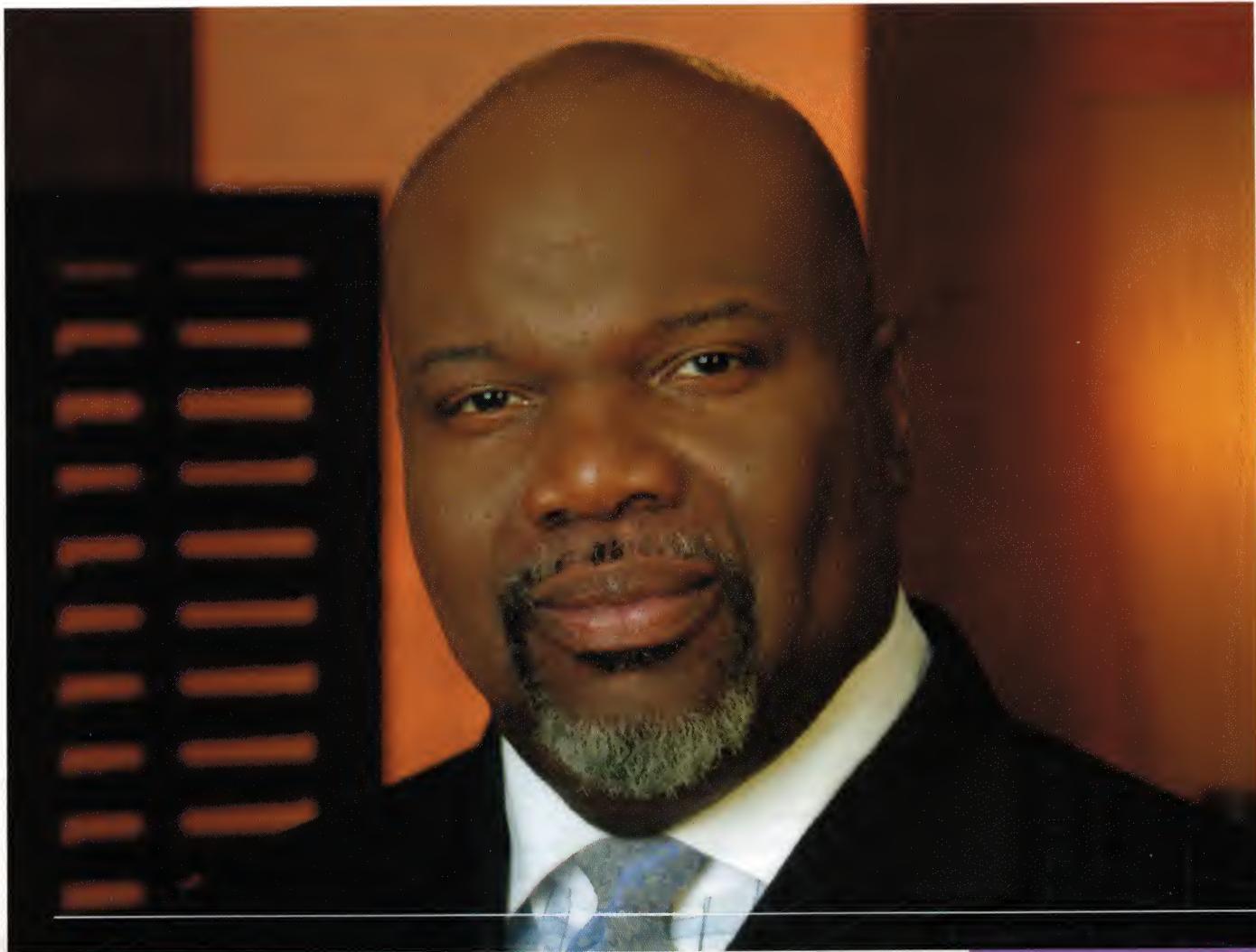
## Johni's Tips for Accessing Private Records

In her search for records associated with the ancestries featured in the series *African American Lives*, genealogist Johni Cerny found herself often successfully gaining access to private estate records. "It was a TV series," she says, "when you mention that, it opens a lot of doors."

For family historians whose family histories won't be part of a TV show, how does Cerny recommend accessing private, personal record collections? "People were wonderful in helping us. But I think it's all in how you approach people. Be professional, honest, and open," says Cerny.

And for the holders of private estate records, Cerny also wants to stress the historical value of those collections—for everyone.

"The American South comprised a huge segment of the population and there were large numbers of people who owned slaves," says Cerny. "If you're part of the slave's or slave owner's descendants, you can learn a lot about how they lived. It's a fascinating study!"



"It certainly helps to know where you're going if you have a clear idea about your family's roots. The more children know about the men and women that came before them, the easier it is, I think, for them to live up to their inherited legacy.

"My mother was an educator and she was adamant about not only teaching my siblings and me basic reading and writing, but also where we came from. As a result of those rich stories passed down from generation to generation, I was already aware of some of my family origin.

"I knew I had some ancestral ties that originated in Africa. But to be presented with findings that point to the specific tribe where [my] ancestors originated... that extensive information provided to us by Dr. Gates and his team was much more detailed and pervasive than anything I could have imagined. They outlined more than just a family tree, [they outlined] the roots that kept my parents grounded, and who I am today.

"We all grew up with family Bibles and keepsakes from generations past, but this is more than information—this is a birthright, and I plan to treat it as such. This is a gift that was presented to my children, my entire extended family, and me for countless generations."

*Bishop Thomas D. (T. D.) Jakes*

*Author, philanthropist, and pastor of the Potter's House*

*Named one of Time magazine's "25 Most Influential Evangelicals" in the United States, 2005*

Still, Cerny admits, each family is different and while Cerny's guidelines worked for the families in the series, she stresses the importance of tailoring individual searches to individual situations. "We had to unravel huge stories," says Cerny. "There are a lot of ways to approach slave research. None of them are identical." And, notes Cerny, when you're searching for a specific name or individual "you can't trace back to Africa." But names alone aren't everything.

## Alternative Routes

Finding a link back to Africa may mean forgoing the quest to trace one person or one family and switching to a broader research concept, like DNA testing, to find a link to a specific group of people. That's what spurred Gates to include DNA as part of the *African American Lives* series.

"My goal is that children, especially inner-city black school children, will realize the wonders of archival research and their own family histories *and* where they came from in Africa—something they can actually touch and something that affects them directly," says Gates. Indirectly, he also wants to be able tell this same audience something about themselves and their genes and their collective experiences. He wants them to see the origins of some of their role models, and understand that their family histories don't end when the first of their ancestors was enslaved. He wants them to know that through technological advances, they may, for the first time, be able to discover the specific African culture from which their families stem.

According to Dr. Rick Kittles, whose company African Ancestry Inc., performed the DNA testing for the series, DNA testing is rapidly gaining popularity in the field of genealogy. But, even so, it still has its limitations.

"It's definitely not a replacement" for record research, says Kittles. "In fact, it only supplements traditional approaches. I'm very frank about that when I talk to people. I say this is not going to replace and it's not the bottom line either. It may only provide general information."

But, says Kittles, DNA testing is one of the few ways to get back to Africa. "It's important first to do as thorough a search as possible," says Kittles, indicating that records will still give the most detailed answers and help determine what to look for with

future DNA testing. "But at that point where you hit a brick wall, well for African Americans there is no Ellis Island database. Because of the slave trade, all of this information was lost. If African Americans want to cross the Atlantic and find where they're from, they almost have to do some DNA testing."

DNA testing, says Kittles, was used in the *African American Lives* series to help hone in on specific regions of Africa from which the participants' ancestors originated. To perform the DNA tests, participants gave a sample of their cheek cells—a simple cotton swab maneuver; no office visit necessary. "African Ancestry's goal was to determine where their maternal or paternal lineages were found in Africa—for most African Americans, our ancestors come from either west or central Africa," says Kittles. That knowledge helped Kittles' organization dig deeper.

Participants' cheek cells were isolated in a standard laboratory procedure, and specific DNA markers were reviewed against DNA markers known to exist within groups and tribes in Africa. The results were then used to give the series' participants an opportunity to, for the first time, visit areas of Africa from where their ancestors were believed to have hailed.

## What They Learned

"It was deeply moving," says Gates. "For one participant, it moved him to tears to see a group of people with whom he shares genes."



Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. sorts through a family tree with Quincy Jones.

Gates isn't merely referring to the DNA findings—he's referring to the whole package that put names, faces, stories, places, and histories to the pasts of a group of very powerful and influential Americans of the present.

Yet Gates admits that even he was surprised by the impact that the show had, particularly in respect to the genealogical findings—an aspect of the show he initially anticipated would take a backseat to DNA testing. But with stories of murder, homesteading, free African American ancestors dating back to America's fight for independence, these ancestral stories were destined to rise to the top.

"When I conceived of the series, I thought the more interesting half would be the revelation of the mitochondrial DNA," says Gates. "But the guests were more fascinated with their genealogy—the real stories we were creating about their ancestors. We're telling them stories about the people from whom they descend."

Throughout the process, research uncovered the skeletal structure of stories of the previous generations of participants' families. And participants in turn shared with the researchers the tales they'd been told throughout their lives—those conveyed on warm summer nights sitting on the front porch, across the dining table during holiday gatherings, or passed down from generation to generation at annual reunions. Cerny notes that, accurate or not, these front-porch stories and legends aren't to be overlooked.

"Those stories," says Cerny, "that the families hand down generation by generation are the most important tool in creating these pedigrees accurately. Yes, there is a lot of myth but you also find very important kernels of truth."

That holds true for any researcher—African American or not. Learning more and digging deeper to find the stories that comprise a family's history can open doors and pathways never before imagined, creating bridges over chasms and blips alike.

"Knowing about the past reveals more about the present. Knowing about your ancestors teaches you more about yourself," says Gates. "I can go back to my fifth great-grand-

## What

*African American Lives*—A four-part PBS original series documenting the family stories, histories, genealogical research, DNA findings, and personal discoveries of eight prominent African Americans.

## Who

Hosted by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Featuring Oprah Winfrey, Whoopi Goldberg, Quincy Jones, Chris Tucker, Dr. Ben Carson, Bishop T.D. Jakes, Dr. Mae Jemison, and Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot.

## Where

*African American Lives* premieres 1 February 2006 at 9 p.m. (ET), and runs throughout the month of February.

## When

PBS—check local listings for specific times, stations, and details.

father who fought in the Revolutionary War and it gives me a greater sense of self. It makes me realize how much at stake my ancestors had in building this country."

And, says Gates, it makes him appreciate how much he still owes to them today. ☾

*Jeanie Croasmun <jcroasmun@myfamilyinc.com> is Senior Editor of Ancestry Magazine.*

*Images courtesy of PBS.*



# The DNAs of Family

**DNA** technology won't replace traditional genealogical research, but it can help focus a search to a specific group or location.

According to Ugo Perego with Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation <[www.smgf.org](http://www.smgf.org)>, having a record of a personal DNA is "just as important as great-grandma keeping a journal. Every generation [of my family] gave me a little piece of them. And just as I am a recipient of this information, my children, grandchildren, also receive it—my genetic information. This genetic information will be around much longer than I will be around," says Perego. "We need to leave something behind so our posterity can find us and know who we were."

DNA testing can't reveal names, dates, or stories. But it can be used as an adjunct to traditional research. For example, when a fifteen-year-old boy made headlines recently by attempting to locate his sperm-donor birth father with the help of DNA, the testing alone didn't net him the answers he was looking for—but it did point him in the right direction of research.

Specifically, the boy was able to tap into the power of Y-chromosome DNA testing—currently the most popular testing—which can help identify paternal lineage. The Y-chromosome is passed from generation to generation in male members of a family. Because it is copied exactly from one generation to another, a matching Y-chromosome in two people

may indicate a relation (although an adjustment needs to be made for random changes or mutations in the Y-chromosome).

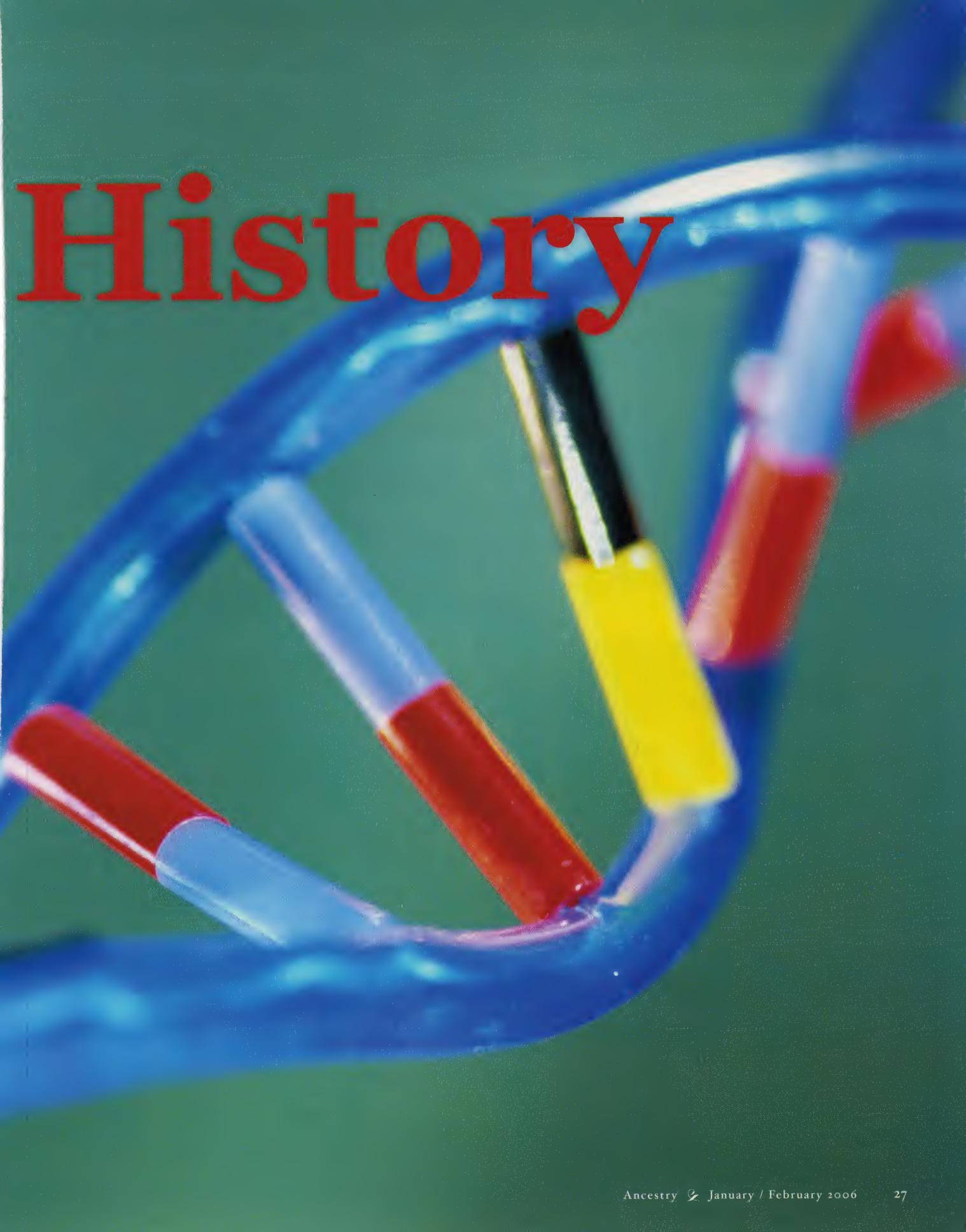
"Every serious genealogist comes to a brick wall; testing your DNA can help you see if your research fits," says Max Blankfield from FamilyTreeDNA <[www.familytreedna.com](http://www.familytreedna.com)>. For the boy in search of his father, more traditional information and e-mail correspondence ultimately located his father; the DNA testing, however, limited the pool of father candidates.

Getting DNA tested is a painless process: FamilyTreeDNA uses DNA testing kits that come with two cheek scrapers and two collection tubes. Samples are collected in a participant's home by the participant and returned, via mail, to FamilyTreeDNA. Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation also uses a mail-in process that includes a special mouthwash intended to help collect a sample.

DNA tests are then compared against known markers, usually for one of two reasons—to see if a person is a member of a specific group or family or to determine if two people who have both had their DNA tested are related. Confidentiality may be a concern, but major DNA databases assert that all personal information is kept confidential. ☐

—Kurt Laird

# History



# Finding the



**TOP:** August A. Busch Sr., during his reign as head of Anheuser-Busch—a company that started as George Schneider's Bavarian Brewery, a small, family business.

**ABOVE:** The former family business, Oscar Mayer, displays its Wienermobile at the Henry Ford Museum.

**RIGHT:** Max Factor, founder of the company that bears his name, demonstrates a Michrometer, an instrument used for taking exact facial measurements.



August Busch: © Corbis; Oscar Mayer: © Wolfgang Kuehne/Corbis; Max Factor: © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis

# American Dream: The Family Business

By Amy Johnson Crow, CG

**S**uccess, fortune, or simply a better life—they're all part of the game when you're chasing the American Dream.

Likewise, they were the goals for a large number of our ancestors, including the ones who immigrated to America in search of a life different from the lives they left behind. And for some of these ancestors, that new life included starting a family business.

Historically, family businesses have been the backbone of the American community. Even today, it's estimated that 80 to 90 percent of all business enterprises in North America are family-owned operations. Chances are good that, even if your ancestors didn't own their own business, they were linked in some way to a family-run operation.

Not every family business developed into a household name like Max Factor or Oscar Mayer. But every family business tells a story—one that goes deeper than the just the name of the person who owned it.

## Family Business for Family Historians

Studying the family business can help any family historian develop a greater grasp of what life was like for the family. There's more information than just the facts of how much money an ancestor made—family businesses can reflect everything from old-world heritage to popular culture, and can include information about collateral relatives and the people and events that may have had an effect on an ancestor's life.

Researching a family business can be very similar to researching a family. But before meaningful research can begin, it is necessary to identify the business. Fortunately, the sources used to find a business are oftentimes the same sources that genealogists use to find a family.

Coors

Bulova

Max Factor

Oscar Mayer

Anheuser-Busch

Martin Guitars

Each business

started as a  
family quest  
to realize the

American  
Dream.

# Nearly 70 percent of family businesses do not make it to the second generation, and less than 15 percent survive to a third generation.

The first place to start a search for a family-owned business is the attic. All sorts of family papers may identify a business, including catalogs, calendars, and advertisements. Family photographs may yield clues—a close look at the background of a photo may reveal a business name on a storefront or on a company truck.

There are clues to be found in the census. Occupations were first listed in 1850. Early listings were fairly general—farming, saw mill, and the like. As the census progressed, so did the detail of the occupation. Starting in the 1900 census, it is not unusual to see occupations such as “fruit dealer (retail),” “tailor,” or “dentist.”

Two of the pre-1850 censuses give a general indication of occupation, though not with a great amount of detail: the 1840 census asked for the number of people in the household engaged in mining, agriculture, commerce, manufacture, navigation, and “learned professional engineers;” the 1820 census recorded the number of people in a household engaged in agriculture, commerce, or manufacturing. It is not possible to tell solely from these schedules which member of the household was in these occupations or, for example, the type of manufacturing in which a person was engaged.

## Searching Directories

City and county directories offer useful detail in identifying the family business. For example, Warren M. Connor is listed in the 1899 Detroit city directory as being with the firm of Connor & Murdoch, which is listed later in the directory as a clothing firm at 2088 River. Considering that there are forty-seven listings for the surname Connor (not to mention the dozens of listings with variant spellings of the name), it is no small detail to identify Warren M. Connor as one of the principals with Connor & Murdoch.

City and county directories can also be used to narrow

the possibilities of family businesses. If neither the census nor the individual's entry in the city directory names the business, a review of the business listings may help. Many directories have categorized business listings in the back of the book. Many small business owners, especially shopkeepers, lived near their enterprise—sometimes even in the same building—so if the ancestor is known to have been a grocer, examining the list of grocery stores and comparing their locations to where the ancestor resided can give a good starting point in identifying which is the correct one.

## Resources

Some of the best sources of information about a family business are the records created by the business itself. Journals, financial statements, and even employee newsletters all give insight into a company. By reviewing purchase orders, researchers might be able to determine if a business kept up with technological advances. Even a look at income can indicate how viable a company remained in a changing society.

Unfortunately, finding and accessing some business records can be challenging. If a business still exists, for example, the current owners may be wary of opening their records to the public beyond what may be required by law.

What of the companies that went out of business? Nearly 70 percent of family businesses do not make it to the second generation, and less than 15 percent survive to a third generation. Business owners may have retained their records, or they may have subsequently tossed out their records when they closed up their shop for good.

When records can't be found, turning to institutions and organizations can help. Prior to going out of business, some companies placed at least a portion of their records with state historical societies, either as a separate record group or as part of a collection of family papers of the founder of the company.

The National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) <[www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc](http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc)>, a collaborative cataloging program operated by the Library of Congress, contains listings of manuscript collections across the United States. It can be an invaluable resource for finding business records, especially ones that end up in off-the-beaten-path repositories.

As an example, using NUCMC, a researcher can find that records of Fletcher, Pack and Company of Alpena, Michigan, from 1868 to approximately 1923 are at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan. Included in the more than four linear feet and seventeen volumes of records are ledgers, day books, tax records, and photographs—treasures for anyone researching the families involved in this business.

## Previous Research

The study of business histories is growing in academic circles as more emphasis continues to be placed on social history—businesses in an area, it turns out, can yield a tremendous amount of information about a community. The good news for family historians, then, is that the odds are improving that a business they're researching will already have a written history. The bad news is that most business histories are published in small quantities and finding one can take a bit of effort.

The best place to start a search for a written history of a business is at the public library of the town in which the company was located. Other places to search include local and state historical societies, state libraries, and college and university libraries within the state.

Industry directories can also provide answers, although they're typically limited to a geographic area or a specific time period. *Black Book Publishers in the United States: A Historical Dictionary of the Presses, 1817-1990*, for example, gives an incredible amount of detail about the founding and history of individual presses, information regarding the type of publishing, and biographical information about some of the founders.

Industry histories, although they may not provide extensive information about a specific ancestor, can offer background and context, like *Over the Barrel: The Brewing History*

*and Beer Culture of Cincinnati*. While the book does not give details on every brewery ever operated in Cincinnati, it offers industry-specific information and details about the forces that changed the industry.

## Other Purposes

When you're looking for more than just the name of the business, you may again want to consult city directories—for advertisements.

Ads may offer information such as when a business was founded and in what facet of an industry that business specialized. An ad for Union Storage Company in the 1912 Milwaukee city directory states that auto storage was a specialty.

Another place to look for detailed information is in 1820, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 census schedules for industries and manufacturers. These schedules were completed at the same time as the population schedules and include specific information about businesses that produced materials or finished products.

Combining directory information and census details can give a researcher the following information:

Hermann Ahlers was a shirt maker on Euclid Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio. His ad in the 1881 Cleveland city directory urged men to see why the "Euclid shirt" was the best. His listing on the 1880 census schedule of manufacturers

# Social History and the Family Business

**W**hat happens when records associated with a family business don't match your existing knowledge of the operation? It could mean it's time to review social history.

In the Coors family example below, the 1900 census lists the family occupation as "brewery owner," but in 1930, it's "pottery and malted milk." What happened to the beer business? A quick review of American history reveals the culprit—Prohibition. The vats were fired up again after Prohibition was repealed in 1933.

### **Coors family—1900 Census**

<b>NATIVITY.</b> Name, place of birth & parents' names.		<b>CITIZENSHIP.</b>		<b>OCCUPATION, TRADE, OR PROFESSION</b> of each person 10 years of age and over.		<b>EDUCATION</b>	
Place of birth of Father of the person.	Place of birth of Mother of the person.	U. S. Citizen Non-citizen Alien Total	U. S. Citizen Non-citizen Alien Total	Occupation	Trade or Profession	Can. Read Can. Write Total	Average Years Attended School
16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Germany	Germany	180,111,724	Germany (Brewh)	0	0	0	0
Germany	Germany	111,724					2
Germany	Germany						0
Germany	Germany						0
Germany	Germany						0
Germany	Germany						0
Germany	Germany	180,424,16	Brewery	0	0	0	0

## Coors family—1930 Census

enumerated by me on <u>April 24</u> , 1930,		<u>William C. Rowling</u>			
<u>1 to 42 on 1/2</u>					
CITIZENSHIP, ETC.		OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY		EMPLOYMENT	
Year of birth of head of family	Place of birth of head of family	OCCUPATION	INDUSTRY	CODE	Class of worker
19	20	Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done; name of employer, master, foreman, etc.	Industry or business, an establishment, firm, company, corporation, public school, etc.	(For office work only; see note at bottom)	(1) self- employed (2) with one or more assistants (3) with 10 or more assistants)
22	23	24	25	26	27
yes	no	Manufacturer	Pottery & Manufacture	7719	yes
yes	no	No AE			
yes	no	None			
yes	no	None			

# The Tasty Side of Heritage

**B**lame it on homesickness or her fresh acquaintance with American cuisine, but Helen Mannarino was craving pierogies.

"I grew up in Poland," says Mannarino, a Polish immigrant who came to America when she was twenty-eight, "and I was missing them."

For the uninitiated, a pierogi is a crescent-moon-shaped pasta pocket of Eastern European-origin (Polish, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian) filled with any variety of goodies like cheese, potato, and sauerkraut. Traditionally, they're served with sautéed onions and maybe a little sour cream on top. And, as anyone who has ever tasted one will attest, they're glorious.

But Mannarino wasn't able to find pierogies that compared to her mother's or her grandmother's. So she started to make her own, based on their recipes.

She started by making them for her family, then gave them out to neighbors and friends. Next thing she knew, people were requesting pierogies, and she started taking orders—a business was born.

This June will mark Mannarino's fifteenth year in the pierogi business as owner of Pierogies Plus <[www.pierogiesplus.com](http://www.pierogiesplus.com)> in McKee's Rocks, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh—a hotbed of U.S. pierogi activity where even the city's major league baseball team, the Pirates, has stuffed pierogi mascots. And while Mannarino has added new pierogi fillings at the request of some of her customers, she still stands by the traditional recipe that she says "my mom passed down to me and her mom to her."

Whether or not this heritage-based family business will remain in Mannarino's family is yet to be seen. "I have only one son and he did help when he was a teenager," says Mannarino, "but he's moved on to other fields." Still, for the time being, Mannarino maintains close family relations—both her mother and her sister, along with a team of other pierogi professionals, work alongside her every day making pierogies.



states that there was \$5,500 capital invested in the business. There were thirteen employees at his shop at one time during that year, of which two were males over the age of sixteen, and eleven were females over the age of fifteen. An ordinary work day was eight hours; skilled workers earned an average of \$3.50 a day, and unskilled workers earned \$1.00 a day. The value of material was \$4,000 and the value of the product was \$12,500.

Beyond the specifics of Ahlers's business, however, is the context in which these records place Ahlers's business. Compared with other shirt makers in Cleveland at the time, Ahlers's operation proves to be fairly typical. Other shirt makers employed mostly females over the age of fifteen and had workdays of eight to ten hours. But Ahlers was atypical in one aspect—pay. His skilled workers earned \$3.50 a day, while skilled workers with other shirt makers earned only \$1.00 to \$2.50 a day. Unskilled workers with other Cleveland shirt makers earned only fifty to ninety cents per day.

Other sources that may be valuable to include in a search for a family business are local newspapers, which can provide advertisements, notices, and news articles about a business. Governments at the local or state level may also provide some unique answers. A business may have registered with or obtained a license from a local or state government. Companies that incorporated would have filed papers with the secretary of state, or may have appeared in annual reports of various state and federal agencies. As an example, the Mining Commission of Ohio's 1871 annual report gives the conditions of specific mines across the state as well as statements of some of the owners and employees.

## All in a Day's Work

Whether your ancestors were chasing the American Dream or just working to pay the bills, learning more about how they earned their keep can help you gain a better understanding of who they were. In some cases, your



## What About the Family?

**G**enealogists are naturally curious, so it is not surprising that there are times when a researcher is already familiar with a business but wants to find the family who owned it instead. So how do you work backwards?

City and county directories are again excellent places to start when trying to identify the family. Many directories listings include the owners of a business. Ads in the directories and in newspapers are also good resources for identifying the owners.

Local historical societies can often assist in identifying a business's owners. In addition, these same societies may even have photographs of storefronts, the owners, and the employees. The vertical files at the local public library may include ephemera such as catalogs or newspaper clippings about local businesses and business owners.

As with any other type of research, the Internet is not to be overlooked. It is not unusual to find at least a little bit about the founder on an existing company's website. You can get the skinny on Ray Croc at the McDonalds website <[www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com)>, squeeze out a little information on Howard John Heinz at the Heinz website <[www.heinz.com](http://www.heinz.com)>, or chew on the history of gum maven William Wrigley, Jr., at <[www.wrigley.com](http://www.wrigley.com)>. Even comparatively small companies will offer their founder's background—the website for the Anthony-Thomas Candy Company <[www.anthony-thomas.com](http://www.anthony-thomas.com)> features a company history, complete with information about founder Anthony Zanatos which gives more proof to the theory that combining chocolate and family history is a sweet proposition, indeed.

search will be simple; at other times, you'll have your work cut out for you. But either way, know that when you peek inside an ancestor's daily routine, you open a new window of appreciation to their lives. ☼

*Amy Johnson Crow, CG, is an author, editor, and lecturer. She is the creator of DeafBiographies.com and is the co-author of Online Roots. She serves as third vice president and webmaster of the Ohio Genealogical Society, and is first vice president of the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors.*

<p><b>HIGHLIGHTED COMPANY:</b> Morgan's Insurance Company Manhattan • • • • • American • • • • • Dinner • • • • •</p> <p><b>C. L. DOUGLASS, Agt.,</b> <b>119½ BANK STREET,</b></p>	<p><b>New York:</b> Alken Andrew J., inc. man, engineer Water Wkrs. r. 515 W. Washington Alken A. F. act, r. 730 Republic Alken B. G. Miss., priu. Clark School, r. 807 Alken Harry, brakeman, r. 10 Davidson Alken Hirsh, r. 301 Scranton av. Alken James, carpenter, r. 105 Franklin School Alken Eugene, farmer, r. ex. Scranton av. nr. Infirmary Alken John W., farmer, r. ex. Scranton av. Alken John, lab., r. 10 Washington Alken Peter, saloon, r. 303 Detroit Amen Philip, saloon, r. 179 Aurora Amen William (Arnold Co.), r. 60 Vega av. Amen William, brewer, r. 1033 Main Amen, brewer, bds. 1033 Main Afield J. hostler, bds. 1152 Euclid av. Aitcock William A. bricklayer, r. 1774 Clarendon Aiger C. N. Dr. offices 31½ Broadway Aiger Charles, Mrs., Mrs. 247 Broadway Aiger Charles, Mr., Britton L. &amp; C. Co. Aiger John, saloon, r. 173 Detroit Aiger John, saloon, r. 2470 Adams Aiger John, lab. bds. 75 Michigan Aiger Gilbert, lab. r. 2445 Cornell Aiger John, saloon, r. 173 Detroit Aiger John, manager Clev. Industrial Mfg. Co., r. 1027 Walker Aigner Thomas, puddler, r. 18 Bradford Aigner Rudolph, lab. bds. 2942 Harvard Aigner Edward, lab. bds. 2942 Harvard Aigner Charles, clk, r. 136 Lake Aigner Charles, clk, r. 2470 Adams Ahern Honora, wid. James T. Lester Ahern John, painter, r. 625 (new No.) Walton Ahern John, painter, r. 625 (new No.) Walton Ahl John, carpenter, r. 11 Dayton Ahl V. Jan, r. 245 Birch Ahlers Herman, lab. r. 245 Birch Ahlers Herman (Hermann Ahlers &amp; Co.), r. 133 Sherman</p> <p><b>AHLERS HERMANN &amp; CO.,</b> Hosiery, Underwear, etc. AND Manufacturers of Shirts, 312 Euclid Ave.</p> <p><b>THOMAS JONES JR.</b> STEAM MARBLE &amp; GRANITE WORKS 28 PROSPECT STREET, 28</p>
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Alken Andrew J., inc. man, engineer Water  
Wkrs. r. 515 W. Washington  
Alken A. F. act, r. 730 Republic  
Alken B. G. Miss., priu. Clark School, r. 807  
Alken Harry, brakeman, r. 10 Davidson  
Alken Hirsh, r. 301 Scranton av.  
Alken James, carpenter, r. 105 Franklin School  
Alken Eugene, farmer, r. ex. Scranton av. nr.  
Infirmary  
Alken John W., farmer, r. ex. Scranton av.  
Alken John, lab., r. 10 Washington  
Alken Peter, saloon, r. 303 Detroit  
Amen Philip, saloon, r. 179 Aurora  
Amen William (Arnold Co.), r. 60 Vega av.  
Amen William, brewer, r. 1033 Main  
Amen, brewer, bds. 1033 Main  
Afield J. hostler, bds. 1152 Euclid av.  
Aitcock William A. bricklayer, r. 1774 Clarendon  
Aiger C. N. Dr. offices 31½ Broadway  
Aiger Charles, Mrs., Mrs. 247 Broadway  
Aiger Charles, Mr., Britton L. & C. Co.  
Aiger John, saloon, r. 173 Detroit  
Aiger John, saloon, r. 2470 Adams  
Aiger John, lab. bds. 75 Michigan  
Aiger Gilbert, lab. r. 2445 Cornell  
Aiger John, saloon, r. 173 Detroit  
Aiger John, manager Clev. Industrial Mfg. Co., r. 1027 Walker  
Aigner Thomas, puddler, r. 18 Bradford  
Aigner Rudolph, lab. bds. 2942 Harvard  
Aigner Edward, lab. bds. 2942 Harvard  
Aigner Charles, clk, r. 136 Lake  
Aigner Charles, clk, r. 2470 Adams  
Ahern Honora, wid. James T. Lester  
Ahern John, painter, r. 625 (new No.) Walton  
Ahern John, painter, r. 625 (new No.) Walton  
Ahl John, carpenter, r. 11 Dayton  
Ahl V. Jan, r. 245 Birch  
Ahlers Herman (Hermann Ahlers & Co.), r. 133 Sherman

**AHLERS HERMANN & CO.,**  
Hosiery, Underwear, etc.  
AND  
Manufacturers of Shirts,  
312 Euclid Ave.

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28 PROSPECT STREET, 28

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Ahlers Herman (Hermann Ahlers & Co.), r. 133 Sherman

Aitcock Alexander, stonecut, r. bds. 78 Water

Aitchison J. A. (Aitchison & Doolittle), r. 39 Broch

Aitchison & Doolittle, machinists, 38 S. Water

Aitcock Alexander, stonecut, r. bds. 78 Water

Aitcock Archibald, lab. r. 180 (new No.) Aaron

Aitken James, carpenter, r. 1767 Clarendon

Aitken John, carpenter, r. 1767 Clarendon

Aitken, John, carpenter, r. 1767 Clarendon

Aitken John, carpenter, r. 1767 Clarendon

A

*Family historians are accustomed  
to silent searching through history,  
but wouldn't it be nice  
if history actually said something to us?*

The Cylinder Preservation and Digitization Project <<http://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu/index.php>> at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) may be able to help.

Cylinder recordings were the first commercially-available sound recordings, debuting just prior to the start of the twentieth century. And, according to UCSB's David Sleubert, the cylinder recordings available in the project's collection—approximately five thousand strong, all digitized, cataloged, and available for download—feature everything from comedy sketches, band marches, popular and ethnic music, and speeches.

What can you learn from the recordings? Says Sleubert, an understanding of social history is key to understanding our ancestors. "It is instructive to listen to the early recordings to see how different [music has become]. A lot of [the recorded music] is based on hymns—sounds very square by our standards—but it is very interesting for us to listen to the music that our grandparents or great-grandparents listened to," says Sleubert.

Odds are good that you won't find your ancestors in the collection, but you may find something equally as valuable to your family history, as was evidenced in the following e-mail message received by Sleubert late last year: "We found something [in the UCSB collection] very close to what we'd always listened to on Christmas morning, and for the first time we were able to identify this song that was recorded in 1908."

Other digitized recordings are available through the Library of Congress <[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)> and the Library and Archives Canada <[www.collectionscanada.ca/gramophone/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/gramophone/index-e.html)>. ☐



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# Piecing Together Your Family History

**S**ifting through family photo albums, Crystal Woodland stumbled upon her grandmother's "patchwork"—a book her grandmother created twenty years earlier from family photos, stories, and leftover fabric scraps.

At the front, a poem penned by Woodland's grandmother:

*Patchwork is the weaving together of life itself, the times of triumph and the memories of despair, the moments of ceremony and the fragments of routine, a history of the human condition for generations past, present and future. Patchwork is not simple in design, but one of struggle for perfection. A piecing together of peoples and traditions to form our heritage.*

Family history is just such a patchwork—one that can connect families by mere names and dates or by the experiences and tales that carry us from one generation to the next.

## Weaving Tales

Woodland's grandmother created her patchwork by mounting family pictures on pieced-together fabric and including brief stories to accompany each entry. It was a simple, yet one-of-a-kind, means of packaging her family stories.

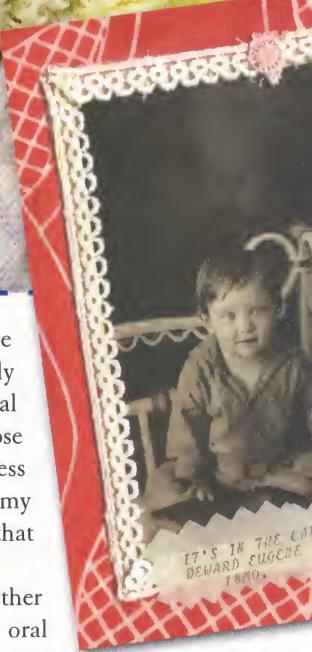
According to Sharon O'Brien, professor of American Studies and English at Dickinson College and author of her own family's memoirs, *The Family Silver: A Memoir of*

*Depression and Inheritance*, it's not just the finished memoirs that hold value for a family historian, it's also the spiritual and historical aspects of the journey of documenting those memoirs. "The process of writing is a process of discovery," says O'Brien. "As I wrote [my family's memoirs], discoveries came to me that wouldn't have come before."

Putting a family's stories into words either via a novel, a documentary, a website, an oral history, or a scrapbook, is a growing trend among family historians. Yet, as generations mature, finding interesting ways to incorporate age-old stories with modern technology and busy lifestyles can pose somewhat problematic.

Woodland is choosing not to follow her grandmother's patchwork—a time-consuming design that required her grandmother to type stories on scraps of fabric and rely on glue and lace for mounting—as she puts her own family's story into print. Instead, Woodland has chosen to storybook her family's life.

Storybooking—developing small storybook-like keepsake books that combine photos and text into a hardbound book that can be printed, shared, and saved—is quickly gaining popularity in a new generation of family historians. Technology has made the process of storybooking simple yet appealing. And, as a bonus, these short books help preserve stories about past generations, while involving multiple generations of a family in their creation. Plus, they're short enough to interest even the youngest generations of a family, motivating everyone to learn more about his or her heritage.





#### PATCHWORK

Patchwork is the weaving together of life itself, the times of triumph and the memories of despair, the moments of ceremony and the fragments of routine, a history of the human condition for generations past, present and future. Patchwork is not simple in design, but one of struggle for perfection. A piecing together of peoples and traditions to form our heritage.

### Family Preserves

Woodland herself is fairly new to family history. But even as a mother with young children in tow, she is motivated to get her family's story into words now. "I decided that I needed to write my grandpa's life story," says Woodland. "I wanted a story so his grandchildren and great-grandchildren could know the kind of man he was."

Woodland started her storybooking project by interviewing her grandparents, aunts, and cousins, and then compiling these memories and family photographs into a book. The end of the book even features a section of first-person advice from a grandfather to his grandchildren.

Linda Barnes also chose storybooking. After Barnes's mother died, Barnes's father handed Barnes the journal her own great-grandmother had written. "You know," he told her, "your mom really wanted you to read this."

Barnes, a student at the time, took her great-grandmother's journal home, but only glanced at it. One day, however, she was given an assignment in a journalism class that reminded her again of the journal. Journal in hand, Barnes combed through microfilms of the local

**By Anastasia Sutherland Tyler**

### Tackling a Story

Every life has a library of stories just waiting to be written. But rather than documenting every detail of a life, consider crafting your family's memoirs—smaller snippets focusing a special event or even a single memory.

The key, say both the experienced and the experts, is to keep the writing project from seeming overwhelming.

"Try not to make it a huge project," suggests Crystal Woodland whose family history research has led her to write a personal collection of family stories—one at a time. "Start with a simple story," Woodland says. "You don't have to write the whole life story at once."

Dickenson College's Sharon O'Brien agrees. Don't set out to write the story of your entire family history, she cautions. "If you feel called upon to write your whole family story it can be overwhelming," she says. "Think 'I want to write two pages or write for half an hour.'"

Not sure what to focus on? Try one of the following ideas:

- Love story—a first date, a marriage proposal, or a wedding
- Baby story—the origin of a person's name or a snapshot of life when a person was born
- Military story—the story of a veteran's military service
- Holiday story—a special tradition loved by the family
- One-of-a-kind story—a graduation, reunion, or anniversary

newspaper for each day that her great-grandmother wrote. "I could make connections between things she talked about in her journal and things mentioned in the newspaper," says Barnes. "Reading day after day, I started to feel like I kind of knew her."

The journal inspired Barnes to write about her own life, thinking that one day *her* grandchildren might even find Barnes's life interesting. And her journal-newspaper project eventually grew to extend beyond the classroom. "I gave a few copies to my cousins," says Barnes. "They were fascinated by it. One of my first cousins has gotten interested in genealogy because of [my great-grandmother's] journal." Even some of Barnes's friends have started researching their own family history because of Barnes's project.

## Involving Extended Family

Grandmother and family historian Donna Ledford successfully involved her extended family in the creation of her family story—a book that spanned one hundred years and focused on her grandfather's family and their life on a homestead.

Ledford's book project started one day when a cousin shared personal memories of the homestead and then wondered aloud what others remembered. Shortly thereafter the project was born with Ledford holding the reins.

Using her family's website, Ledford collected stories, photographs, songs, and poems written by or about her grandparents and their descendants. The compiled memories resulted in a 365-page bound book that Ledford debuted at a family reunion. "By the family dinner," Ledford says, "I had sold every copy and had orders for more."

## Motivating Children and Teenagers

Developing an interest in family history in somewhat difficult-to-reach children and teenagers was a side effect to the book that Ledford hadn't anticipated—but one she appreciated nonetheless.

"I'm just amazed at the younger generation," says Ledford of the response to the family book. "My grandchildren have read the book from front to back. Now they are keeping journals because they understand leaving a record for future generations."

Lori Hansen, a mother of four, remembers what family history felt like to her as a child—she was intimidated by the "binders and binders of family history" she saw when young. That intimidation stuck with her as she reached adulthood. "I never got into family history because it was overwhelming," she says. "I didn't know where to begin." But when Hansen's father died eighteen months ago, she decided it was finally time to act. "He had grandkids ages nineteen years down to newborn," says Hansen. "I wanted them to remember their grandfather."

## Writing Your Story

You don't have to be Shakespeare to become the family bard. "I'm not a writer," says Lori Hansen, so writing her first family memoir "scared me to death."

To create her story, Hansen gathered pictures of a family event. As she laid the pictures in front of her, memories flooded back. "It was really easy to write once I had everything in front of me," said Hansen.

Remember, writing your family's story is not about how well you write, it's about preserving family heritage for others to enjoy. If you don't think your writing skills are up to par, just think how tragic it would be if the story weren't passed down.

Hansen spent hours with her grandmother, going through pictures, hearing stories, and developing a deep relationship. "That is when I really felt that deep urgency and deep love for creating these stories," says Hansen. She set a goal—to fill a bookshelf with stories of her children's heritage. "Instead of having Superman and other fictional heroes, I want my little boy to know that he has relatives who were heroes."

## Piecing Together Lives

It wasn't always easy putting down her family's life story but, as former journalism student Barnes reasons, "If I didn't do it, who would?" While she was pressed for time, Barnes, like other family memoir writers, reasoned that this wasn't just a self-centered act—the finished work would preserve her family's heritage and the stories that comprised their lives for future generations.

"When you decide to tell your family story it doesn't let you alone," says O'Brien, as both a professor and family memoir writer. "I felt chosen, that I had to do it."

Woodland, whose own journey started two decades ago when her grandmother created that simple patchwork of the family, understands this drive to tell the story all too well. And she relishes the way the process has helped her connect to her family—both present and past. "Once you start creating storybooks," says Woodland, "you really start to appreciate your family, where you came from, what kind of person you are. And who you should be." ♡

Anastasia Sutherland Tyler is a contributing editor for Ancestry Magazine; Jeanie Croasmun contributed to this article. Special thanks to Sharon O'Brien, whose book *The Family Silver: A Memoir of Depression and Inheritance*, is available at <[www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/616649.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/616649.html)>, Crystle Woodland <[www.createmyheritage.com](http://www.createmyheritage.com)>, and Lori Hansen <[www.writeyourfamilystories.com](http://www.writeyourfamilystories.com)> for their assistance.

# Your Family Storybook

HERITAGE MAKERS

Memoirs of Mimi  
Celebrating 104 Years of Life



Ready to create  
a family storybook  
but not sure  
where to start?

Consider enlisting an  
organization like  
Heritage Makers  
[www.heritagemakers.com](http://www.heritagemakers.com)  
to help you create a printed,  
professionally-bound  
storybook from your  
home computer.

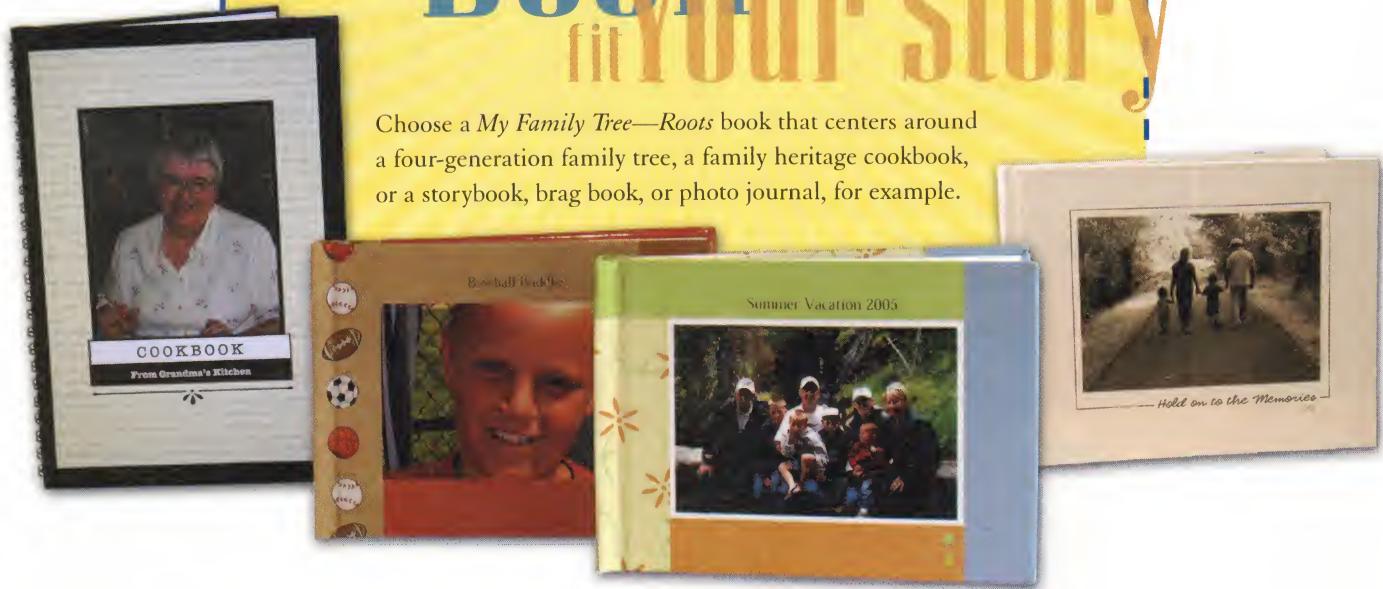
## Start with a Story

Focus on a single person like your great-grandmother or an event like how your parents met, or develop a story around your family tree. If you find yourself with too many good stories to tell, a Heritage Makers representative—a Heritage Consultant—can help you sort through your ideas.

Heritage Makers is owned by MyFamily.com, Inc., publisher of Ancestry Magazine.

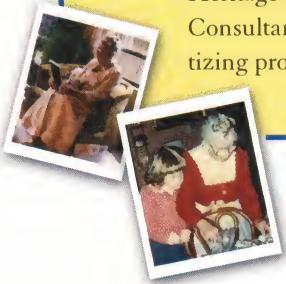
# Decide which Book will best fit Your Story

Choose a *My Family Tree—Roots* book that centers around a four-generation family tree, a family heritage cookbook, or a storybook, brag book, or photo journal, for example.



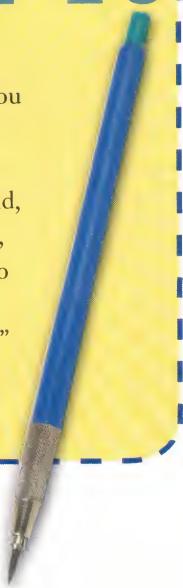
# Gather Photos and Images to illustrate your story

Each image you select will need to be digitized in order to be uploaded to the Heritage Makers website (a Heritage Consultant can assist you with the digitizing process).



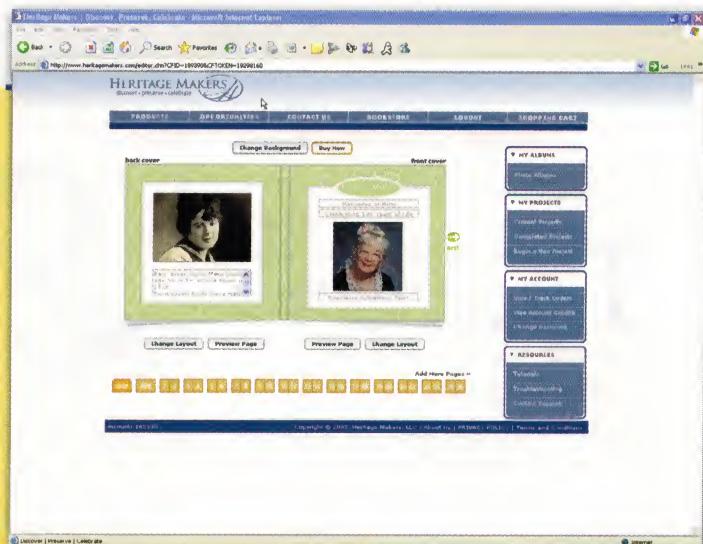
# Sit Down and Write

Heritage Makers' Storybook Planner includes questions and ideas that will prompt you about life events, something customer-turned-Heritage Consultant Crystal Woodland, a self-proclaimed non-writer, swears by. "All you have to do is answer the questions and your story is written for you," says Woodland.



# Create your Book

Heritage Makers' online publisher will walk you through the process. You'll work on a template for each page (Note: The template can also be easily modified—swap out a half-page of text for a full-page image, for example, or vice-versa). Online tutorials and instructions such as "Click to place image" or "Click to edit text" prompt you regarding what to do next.



# Preview your Pages

Once you've placed your text and images, you have the opportunity to look at what you've created to ensure it's exactly what you want.



To create a Heritage Makers book, you must sign up for an account through a Heritage Consultant—Heritage Makers is a party-planned, home-based company. Heritage Consultants introduce, explain, and sell books, usually through in-home celebrations, and act as mentors for customers, walking each person through the book-creation process and the use of Heritage Makers online tools. For more information on creating a heritage book or to find a consultant near you, visit Heritage Makers at <[www.heritagemakers.com](http://www.heritagemakers.com)>.

# Print your Book

Each book has a hard cover (you create a custom cover as well) with a stitched library binding—pages won't fall out. All Heritage Makers books are printed on demand, allowing you to order your book in any quantity, and archived to allow you to print additional copies whenever you want. Books takes about ten business days to process, plus shipping time.



# when. 2 stories collide

**T**all tales and fables—they almost always change with the teller. But Marilyn Elaine Patrice White's family fable may be an exception.

"When I was little," says White, "my grandmother used to tell me about Kalima who was the older kid in a village on the coast of Africa who was supposed to be watching the other kids while the elders were out in the field. Kalima disobeyed. So when all of those kids [he was watching] saw something red on a boat, they wanted to get a little closer to look at it," says White. And they did.

When the elders in the village returned from the fields, they realized all of the children were gone—captured by what turned out to be a slave ship waving a red flag. Tried as they might to get the children back, legend has it that the ship's captain, Captain Bernard, wouldn't let them go.

White never thought much about the story. "I wasn't into family history," she says. Probably wasn't true anyway. After all, it was just some story that her grandma told.

As an adult, however, White's interest in the story changed when she attended a group field trip to a family history library.

"Everybody else [on the field trip] was busy, and I was wandering around doing nothing," says White. "So I pulled out a genealogical journal—it was like ten years old—and I recognized a surname that a friend was researching." White made a copy of the article to send to her friend, but before she could get the papers in the envelope, she noticed something else—the surname Seaton in an adjacent article. Seaton was also the surname of White's Kalima ancestors.

White took a chance that the Seaton in the article was a relative and set out to find him. One call netted not only Seaton but found him to be a relative as well.

Seaton and White shared stories of their family lines—families that hadn't been in contact with one another for over a century. "I started the story of Kalima but I didn't say Kalima," says White, "when all of a sudden [Seaton] finishes the story and says 'Captain Bernard wouldn't let them off.'"

White's research on her Seaton line continued from there, but only when her busy schedule afforded her a little free time. On one of those occasions, she again stumbled upon Kalima—this time in a book written by another previously-unknown Seaton descendant.

Now White had to wonder—three people who didn't know each other but who knew the same fable? Was it really just a tall tale?

Today, White thinks there might be something to the Kalima story, and, as time permits, she's trying to find out for sure. But even if she never determines whether Kalima is fact or fiction, White has one fact of her family history straight: "Everything has been such wonderful serendipity," she says. And that, believes White, just adds to the mystique of her family's far-reaching tale.



# On the Record

## Collecting Oral Histories

by Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, CG, CGL

**A**sk two people to tell you about the same event or the same person and you'll get two different stories. The facts may remain the same—Grandpa was six-foot two-inches and born during a snowstorm—but the perspective will be unique to the storyteller.

As the family historian, you probably want to remember each of these individual nuances. And you can, via an oral history.

### Why Oral History?

We've all heard family stories. But there's a difference between jotting down your take on a family story and hearing that same story from a person who was there, or even from a person who is a generation closer to the event. When you sit down to record the words directly from the source, you capture that speaker's view, and you create an oral history.

Oral histories are planned, recorded interviews designed to save every word spoken by an interviewee. For the family historian, oral histories result in lasting first-person records—tapes, documents, or both—of people detailing their life experiences.



There are two basic ways to conduct oral history interviews: directed and non-directed. In a directed interview, an interviewer asks questions, based on previous background research, that specifically relate to the individual being interviewed. In a non-directed interview, a prepared list of questions is asked of a number of people—useful, for example, when soliciting responses from a group of people who were all involved in the same event.



**Elizabeth:** Tell me about your dad. What do you remember about your dad?

**Walter:** My father was a very good bowler and a good golfer. He had a bowling average, about 195, and even after he had a stroke and lost vision in one eye, he still was a good bowler.

**Elizabeth:** I never knew that.

**Walter:** Hmm?

**Elizabeth:** I never knew that.

you want to learn? Will you question Grandpa about his entire life or just about specific events?

If you plan to conduct the interview yourself, you should be aware that you may hear stories that you're not comfortable hearing and that the interviewee may not be comfortable sharing with you. In these situations, an outsider might be better suited to conduct the interview.

Next, decide how many interviews you will conduct. While you may have plenty of stamina, your interviewee may have physical constraints or other commitments that keep him or her from spending too much time with

you during an interview. If your interviewee is unable to talk for more than an hour, you may want to schedule a series of interviews over the course of several weeks. However, if an interviewee is located a great distance from you, you may be limited to a single interview.

You will need a place to conduct an interview. Because of background noise, an interviewee's residence or the local coffee shop may not be

the ideal interview location—background noise can make transcribing an interview difficult. If possible, test the recording equipment you plan to use in the location you plan to conduct the interview beforehand to determine if you need to make adjustments or other arrangements.

Detailed research on an interviewee should be conducted prior to an interview. For the family historian, this may mean going beyond a person's birth and marriage date and place. You'll want to know as much as possible about where the interviewee grew up, what family life was like, what jobs he or she held, and other key events, such as marriage and children. Knowing more about a person can help you develop a strong list of questions and help you focus the interview to meet your goals.

As you conduct your research, jot down open-ended questions you'd like to have answered—avoid questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no. Sometimes it's more effective to prepare a list of key points that you want to cover in the interview and a timeline of the interviewee's life to act as your personal guides.



**Elizabeth:** I understood that at some point the brothers stopped getting along.

**Walter:** Oh the brothers, I don't think they ever got along. Fred I didn't see too much, he was the oldest one, and Charlie was, well, my dad, later on, when we left Marinette and came back down to Chicago in 1939, my father went to work for Charlie in Drake Petroleum Company and Charlie was an SOB. That's all. He just was out to get all he could get and wasn't giving anything to anybody. I think he was responsible for my father's stroke or heart attack. And... but he did give Dad a job when we came down from Marinette.



**Walter:** We lived in Cedar Lake at that time. Dad owned an ice cream parlor on the main drag in Cedar Lake. It was the main drag but it was only a block long.

**Elizabeth:** Your dad owned the ice cream parlor?

**Walter:** Yeah. He ran...he ran or owned. I'm not sure if he owned it or whether he ran it or what. But I know I used to sneak in there and help myself all the time.

### *Audio vs. Video Taping*

Should you audiotape or videotape an interview? The choice may not be yours—sometimes a person who is comfortable sitting and talking into a tape recorder will cringe at the thought of being videotaped (if you're uncertain, ask the interviewee). Regardless of whether audio or video is more convenient for you, you'll get the most from an interviewee who is comfortable with the environment.

If you're planning to audiotape an interview, use a good quality audio cassette recorder with an external microphone—you may even want to rent professional recording equipment from a local rental agency. Remember to test the equipment before you start the interview and choose durable, high-quality tapes suited for the job and for long-term storage. Specialty audio and electronics stores can help you choose the products best suited to the task.

If you're videotaping, consider enlisting the help of someone else to operate the camera. Without a camera operator, both interviewer or interviewee can become distracted with the operation of the camera. Mount the video camera on a tripod during an interview and attach lapel microphones to the interviewee and interviewer to get the best results. Be sure to check power supplies and batteries in both the camera and the microphones before you start.

### *Legal Issues*

Copyright issues may become a factor, even if you're just conducting an informal interview with Grandma. Legally, both the interviewer and interviewee share the copyright to an oral history interview (an exception occurs when an interviewer is conducting the interview as a work for hire). While copyright may never come into question, you should still protect yourself from potential copyright infringement by having both the interviewer and the interviewee sign release forms at the time of the taping.

Sample interview release forms can be found on the Smithsonian Institution's website <[www.folklife.si.edu/resources/pdf/InterviewReleaseForm.pdf](http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/pdf/InterviewReleaseForm.pdf)>. To learn more about potential legal considerations, see John A. Neuenschwander's booklet *Oral History and the Law* (available from the Oral History Association <[http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/pub\\_ps.html](http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/pub_ps.html)>) or review details about copyright law and the Copyright Act of 1976 (and later revisions) at <[www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)>.

### *Conducting the Interview*

Before you start the interview, check again for background noises; if practical, turn off or remove telephones. Be sure not to place the microphone too close to a fan or other device that creates a constant noise, however slight. Have all props and artifacts, like photos or souvenirs, readily available.

Start your recording with detailed information including who you are, who is being interviewed, and who else is in

### **Now or Never?**

There's no time like the present to get started on an oral history project. Often we procrastinate on projects such as these where the passage of time is not our friend.

Shortly after my husband and I purchased a video camera back in the mid-1990s, we purposely sat with each set of parents and asked them to recall what they could of their childhood and of their parents. While these interviews were not conducted quite the way a proper oral history project would be, it's all we have, as both of our fathers have since died. So even if you can't follow all of my suggestions, be sure to follow this one—get your interviews done now before it's too late.

—Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens



**Walter:** It was cold around Cedar Lake and we had good winters. And there was a railroad track running between the main street and the lake. I was out belly-flopping on the ice on the lake in my sled, and, of course, being a little kid—curious—I stick my tongue on the metal part of the sled and it froze. My tongue freezes to the metal part on the sled, so then I have the problem of getting somewhere where it could heat up and melt my tongue off of there. So I get up and start back toward our fire, we had one pot-belly stove in our house, and I start back toward that and a train came along. And here I am holding this sled and I had to wait for a train to go by so I was really in bad shape. So I finally get, the train goes by, and I go to the house and lay down on the floor in front of the pot-belly stove until it... and I had to wait until it melted my tongue off the sled. {Laughter} Very painful experience.

the room (assisting or not). Also, specifically state the date and location of the interview and what you intend to cover during the interview. Note that both you and the interviewee will be signing a release form. If you are videotaping the interview, you may want to list all of these facts in large print on a sheet or two of paper and videotape these pages as you would a film slate.

If you're audiotaping the interview, consider bringing a still camera to the interview to take photos of the interviewee at the time of the interview, and to make photographic copies of artifacts that the interviewee brings to the interview.

Proceed with the interview in a manner that makes the interviewee comfortable. Make eye contact and watch for visual cues indicating fatigue or boredom. Be prepared to roll with the punches—the interviewee is, after all, doing you a favor. Offer breaks when warranted and remember not to overstay your welcome, a particularly important consideration if you're counting on follow-up interviews.

### *Post-Interview*

After the interview, make at least two backup copies of the recording—one for the interviewee, and one for you. Store the original in a safe place. Use your backup, not the original, to make the written transcription.

The transcript you create is possibly the most usable portion of the interview for both researchers and descendants and therefore requires great care during production. If you are unable to prepare the transcript yourself, consider hiring a professional transcribing service to do the job for you.

## Cutting Through the Tape of Oral History

Lore? Legend? Tradition? Tall tales? Exactly where does oral history fit into a family's stories?

According to Donald Ritchie, author of *Doing Oral History*, oral histories of family members will probably include every kind of story, even folklore, that an interviewee cares to recall.

Still, the true goal of capturing a structured oral history, says Ritchie, who maintains the oral history project for the U.S. Senate Historical Office, is to help a witness to history—family member or not—candidly recall events that happened decades before

and to preserve those memories long-term.

Oral histories should benefit everyone involved: interviewer, interviewee, and future listeners. And a well-done oral history will rarely be confused with staid textbook accounts or snippets of information presented on the nightly news.

"Oral historians record the memory and observation and thoughts of the person they're talking to," says Ritchie, "and get people to express themselves as fully, candidly, and thoroughly as possible." The result is an off-

the-cuff, insider's view of a historical event and a record of an interviewee's personality, charm, and character.

That's good news for the family historian whose interviews of family members keep unearthing tales of unimaginable proportions that may or may not be factual. "Oral historians get a lot of folklore," laughs Ritchie. So, as long as it's understood that these tales, which, while not factual, present personal and family character and tend more towards folklore than fact, there's room for even the most fantastic of stories in recorded family interviews.

If you perform the transcription without transcribing equipment, use the stop and start buttons on your tape recorder rather than the pause button—this can help prevent damage to the tape caused by pausing—and use the backup copy so your original doesn't get damaged. Also to save the tape, try to listen, stop the tape, type, and then start the tape again, all without rewinding.

Once you've completed the transcription, you may choose to edit it for clarity or brevity, but be careful not to lose the voice and character of the interviewee. Remember,

these are the exact reasons you chose to create an oral history in the first place.

Lastly, after you've completed all edits, consider putting the written transcript into a more readable format. Digitize images and add them with the help of publishing software. Include scans of pertinent documents. Donate a copy of the tape and the transcript to the interviewee's local historical society (include a copy of the signed release form). And always provide the interviewee with his or her own copy of the interview. After all, you've just contributed a small part to preserving his or her legacy. ☐



**Walter:** Well, we lived in Marinette for ah, till 1939. We lived in three houses in Marinette. The first one was on Main Street and we had a dog named Nertz, a bulldog named Nertz. I remember that. And the second one was on Marinette Avenue, and the third place we lived in was on Marinette Avenue. And I've got a little house made out of balsa wood that, I still have that house that I've made out of balsa wood, where you can take the . . . open up the house and see the floor plan and everything.

**Elizabeth:** Which house was that?

**Walter:** It was our third house in Marinette.

**Elizabeth:** Did you make it?

**Walter:** Yeah, I made it myself.

**Elizabeth:** I didn't know that.

**Walter:** Well it's here, still got it.

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- All oral history excerpts taken from an oral history interview with Walter Albert Kelley conducted by Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, 4 September 1995.*

*Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, CG, CGL, is the managing editor of Genealogical Computing and the NGS NewsMagazine and is a frequent contributor to Ancestry Magazine.*

*"In all of us there is a hunger marrow deep to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we came from. Without this enriching knowledge there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainment in life, there is still a vacuum, an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness."*

— Alex Haley

**W**henever we travel the country, people question us about our hobby. Of all the questions people ask, there are a handful that we hear repeatedly from people interested in starting their own family history research. You may want to take note—the answers to these fundamental questions can help anyone who's considering family history as a hobby understand a little more about the endeavor.

## Question 1: Why research my family's history?

The reasons we get involved in family history research are as varied as our ancestors. However, if you're considering family history as a hobby, you may want to look at the following list of basic reasons for getting involved in it. If three or more of these reasons catch your interest, congratulations—you may have found a wonderful new hobby.

- A. *Genealogy helps us understand who we are and where we come from.* We live in such a fractured world today that many of us are removed from our true roots. Genealogy can connect us to those roots via our ancestors and help us develop links to our often varied cultural heritages.



# BEGINNERS' QUESTIONS ANSWERED

by Terry and Jim Willard

# Genealogy helps us understand who we are and where we come from.



- B. *Genealogy offers us an opportunity to connect with current family members.* While time separates us from our ancestors, distance often separates us from our living relatives. But as we gather information on our ancestors, we may also discover that other family members are looking for the same ancestors or that our relatives hold information that could prove useful in our research. Either way, genealogy is a great way to reconnect.
- C. *Genealogy is an excellent cross-generational activity.* As adults, we may be curious about our family's past, but children often have an even greater curiosity. And children love hearing stories about their family from a grandparent.
- D. *Genealogy is an excellent way*

*to gather information on recurring family health issues.* As the number of diseases with possible genetic connections continues to grow, family history research provides a wonderful opportunity to build a medical pedigree detailing health conditions prevalent in our families—something that may one day prove lifesaving.

- E. *Genealogy research can result in a useful body of information that can be passed on to others.* Whether members of your family's current generations are interested in the family history, it is almost certain that descendants in future generations will want to know more about their heritage.
- F. *Genealogy offers an opportunity to travel.* Traveling to an ances-

tral homeland can be stimulating, emotional, educational, and most of all, fun.

- G. *Genealogy is a great application for the home computer.* Whether using the Internet to research ancestors, using computer software programs to organize and store family history information, or using e-mail to contact other researchers and family members, the marriage between the computer and genealogy is a match made in heaven.
- H. *Genealogy is a stimulating activity that keeps us thinking.* And as we all get older, finding new activities to keep our brains firing is very important.
- I. *Genealogy is a flexible hobby.* Regardless of our other interests, genealogy can fit into almost any schedule. We can devote a lot of time or a little time to pursuing our ancestors.
- J. *Genealogy leads to a better appreciation of history.* Once we discover that we had ancestors living in a particular place at a particular time, the history of that place and time takes on a whole new meaning.

## Question 2: How do I get started?

How do you start? Try the following recommendations:

- A. Consult a good how-to book.
- B. If you are not already comfortable with using a computer, become so.
- C. Take a course in genealogy through a local adult education program, a local library, or online.

- D. Write down everything you know about yourself and your family and enter this information into a genealogy software program such as *Family Tree Maker 2006*.
  - E. Connect with other genealogists by joining a local genealogy society, an ethnic genealogy society (if relevant), or a national genealogy society.
  - F. Join a family association—search for phrases like “Willard Family Association” from an Internet search engine to see if a family association for your surname exists.
- B.** *Publish your work.* This will ensure your research is available for future generations. If you choose to create a limited number of copies of your work, be sure to donate one of those copies to the Library of Congress.
- C.** *Create a monument to your ancestors, either literally in the form of a grave marker or more subjectively in the form of a memorial scholarship.* Remember, however, that there isn’t necessarily a need for a concrete memento—the process of researching your family history and the pleasure you derive from the task can be the best reward of all. ☾

### Question 3:

#### How do I organize my information?

Use pencil and paper or a genealogy software package to help you organize your family’s information through the following means:

- A. Write individual data on note cards; file the cards alphabetically by surname.
- B. Create a five-generation pedigree chart.
- C. Create a family group sheet.

### Question 4:

#### Will the Internet help me?

Yes. And remember, the more comfortable you are using a computer, the more Internet technology can help.

### Question 5:

#### How can I ensure my research endures?

There are a number of options open to you in terms of what you can do with your research.

- A. Designate a family member to carry on your research.* Just as you are the keeper of the flame for your generation, there is bound to be someone to whom you can pass the torch. If not, leave your research to a local library, historical society, or genealogy society.

*Terry and Jim Willard hosted the ten-part PBS Ancestors series. They have researched their family history fifteen generations back on both sides.*

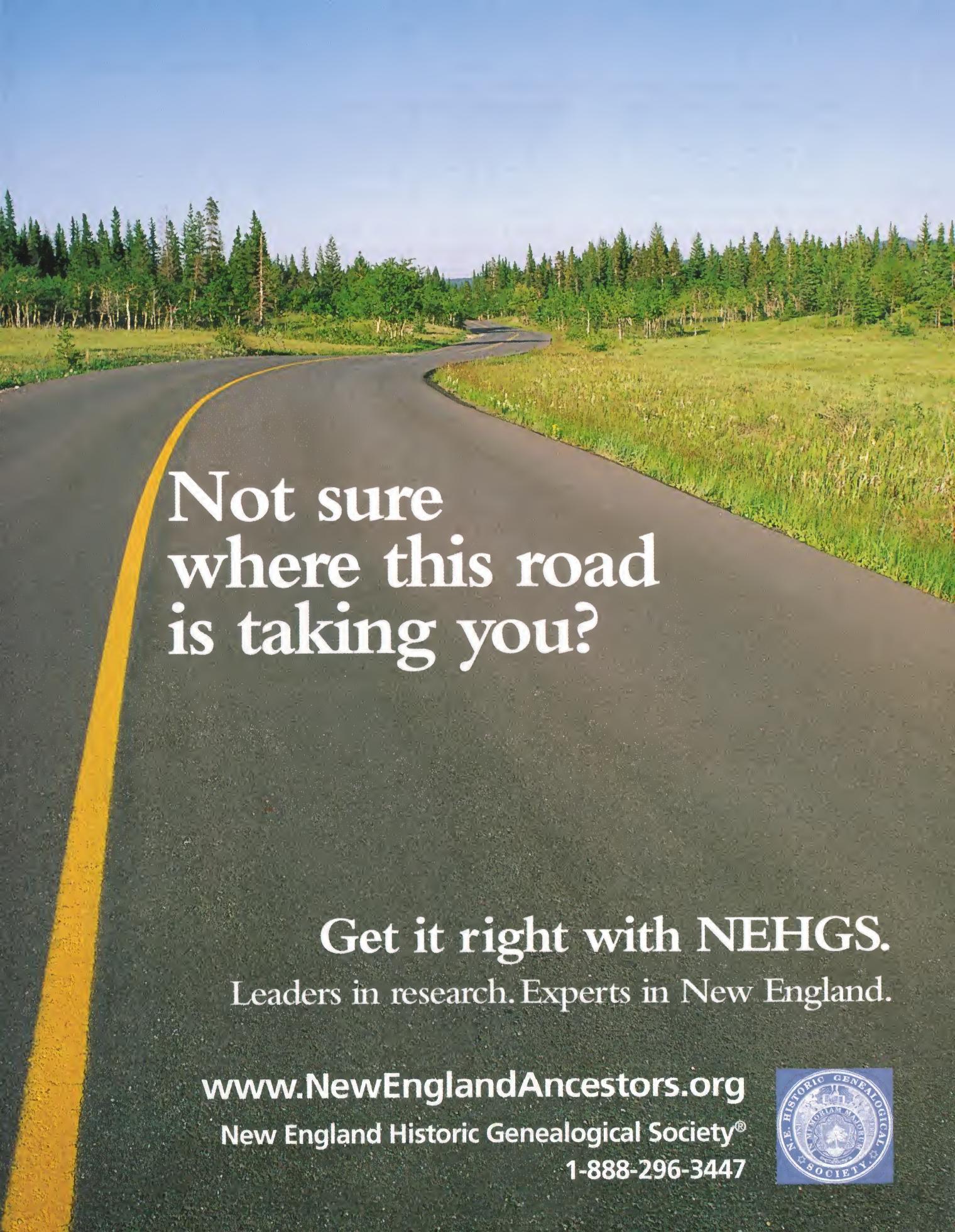
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A photograph of a paved road curving through a dense forest of tall evergreen trees. The road has a solid yellow center line. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

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**T**here's never enough time to check all of the sources that might contribute to our family history, so the only solution is to check them out in some sort of logical order that uses our time most effectively. In other words, follow a plan.

In the past, research planning was largely a matter of deciding which libraries or repositories to visit first, so we wouldn't have to return a second time for something we missed on the first visit. To avoid overlooking significant sources, we placed heavy emphasis on indexes and finding aids that would shorten our search.

Today, the availability of online search engines and CD-ROM indexes lets us do much of the legwork from home. However, the results we get when we check for a name in hundreds of databases may give us a flood of possibilities with little that indicates which might apply to the problem at hand.

Just as in pre-computer times, we need to check these available sources in a planned and logical order to make the most efficient use of our time. We need to develop our own order of searching the available databases, beginning with those most likely to yield positive results. We need to create a research plan.

## Planning the Plan

Plans can be just a few notes jotted on the back of an envelope or lengthy works that require several feet of shelf space. Although your plan doesn't have to be committed to paper, even when it is, a genealogy research plan seldom requires more than a single page.

A plan consists of four basic elements:

- 1) **Objective.** A brief statement of what you want to discover. A written objective can help you focus



# Plan the Attack

By Donn Devine, CG

your efforts and keep your research from wandering off course, even when those side paths that open up are very interesting.

- 2) **Resources.** Sources of information that may contribute toward

reaching the objective. First among the resources is any information already collected, the conclusions drawn from that information, and books and publications that are at hand—family records and



other sources found in the home. Additional sources will require more traditional methods of research. Today, fortunately, a number of these sources can be accessed from

our homes via e-mail and through databases available online.

- 3) **Sequence.** A list of the sources to consult in the order in which they will be used or applied. Creating the

sequence requires the identification of published compilations, databases, and series of original records that are most likely to contain information relating to our objective. Creating a sequence that begins with sources that have indexes, finding aids, or online search capabilities will also help you narrow your search.

- 4) **Arrangements.** Tools that need to be assembled and contacts and commitments that must be made before a search can begin. For example, you'll want to note required fees, hours of operation, transportation schedules, parking, advance requests or permissions, services available, and equipment necessary if you'll be conducting research away from home. This attention to detail can make the difference between success and frustration.

# Research Plan

## OBJECTIVE

Identify the parents of Any Name, born Wilmington, Delaware, 14 January 1896.

## RESOURCES

Original Information:

- City of Wilmington birth registrations.
- Catholic parish baptisms.

Secondary Information:

- U.S. Census—1900, 1910.
- Social Security Death Index.
- SS-5 application for Social Security account.
- New Castle County marriage registrations.

## LOCATIONS AND SEQUENCE

- 1) At home, online—U.S. census 1900 (Ancestry.com subscription); if ancestor is not found, search 1910 census.
- 2) SSDI (RootsWeb.com, for SSN to order SS-5 form).
- 3) Catholic baptisms (selected parishes, to 1900)—<[www.lalley.com](http://www.lalley.com)>.

- 4) Historical Society Library, Wilmington.

- a. Microfilms of Catholic baptisms.
- b. City directories, backwards from 1918.

- 5) Delaware Public Archives, Dover.

- a. Microfilmed Wilmington birth registrations, 1896; later if not found (for late registration).
- b. Indexes, New Castle County marriage registrations, 1915–25.
- c. If indexed, New Castle County marriage registrations.

- 6) Order SS-5 form from Social Security Administration, if parents not identified elsewhere.

## ARRANGEMENTS

- Historical Society Library, Wilmington hours—Monday 1–9; Tuesday through Friday 9–5 <[www.hsd.org/library.htm](http://www.hsd.org/library.htm)>. Photocopies available for a fee.
- Delaware Public Archives, Dover—Monday through Saturday, 8–5 <[www.state.de.us/sos/dpa/collections/hours.shtml](http://www.state.de.us/sos/dpa/collections/hours.shtml)>.

# Planning isn't a one-time effort. It's a cyclical process that needs to be analyzed, updated, and modified each time a step is completed.

## Seeing the Plan

But what exactly would a successful research plan look like? The example on page 52 shows a research plan with a typical research objective and an efficient order for consulting the available sources to achieve a research goal. Reviewing such a plan can give you a better idea of what would be included in your own research plan.

## Rejuvenating the Plan

Planning isn't a one-time effort. It's a cyclical process that needs to be analyzed, updated, and modified each time a step is completed. Each time after you have the results from an original plan, you should analyze these results for the following:

- 1) Was sufficient data found to reach your objective? If not, have all of the available resources been exhausted? Or should this objective be put aside in favor of a new objective?
- 2) What is the logical next step to become the objective for a new plan?
- 3) Did anything found suggest other approaches that could be used in a new plan toward the same objective?

That's all there is to it. For re-

peated research of the same kind, it may not even be necessary to list the sequence on paper since it can be easily remembered. However, you should never neglect committing to paper or hard drive an explicit statement of your objective. Without a written objective, anyone runs two risks that can consume productive time—being led into non-productive by-ways, and failing to stop when the research is done and it's time to take stock and analyze what was found and select an objective for the next phase of research.

A few minutes devoted to planning an efficient order for searching available sources is time extremely well spent. An effective plan can double or triple the research you can complete within any given period. ☐

*Donn Devine, CG, a genealogical consultant from Wilmington, Delaware, is an attorney for the city and archivist of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington. He is a former National Genealogical Society board member, currently chairs its Standards Committee, is a trustee of the Board for Certification of Genealogists, and is the administrator for Devine and Baldwin DNA surname projects.*

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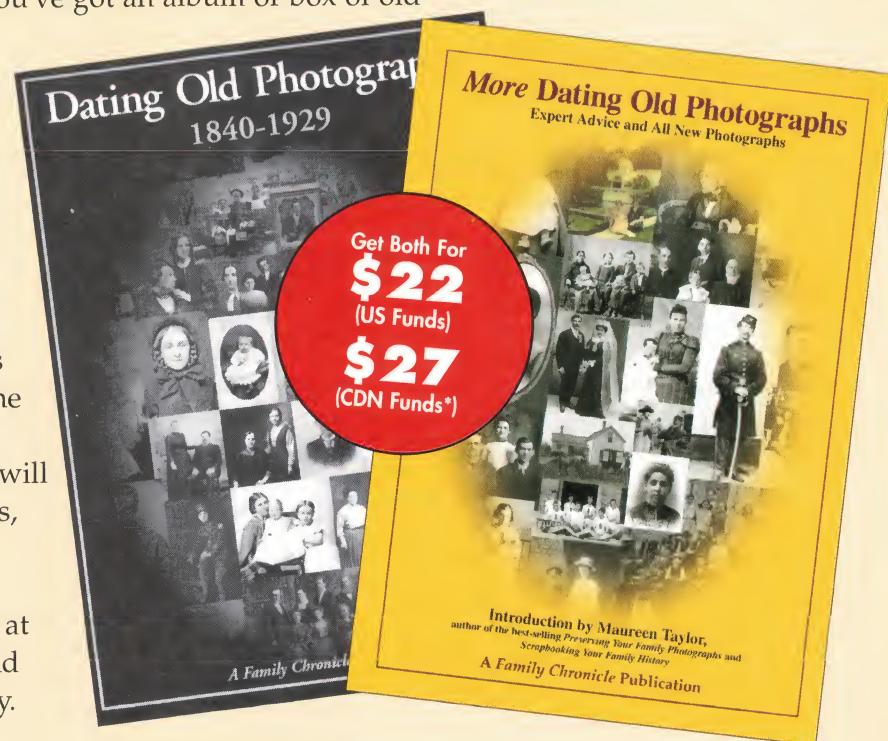
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For so many people, the excitement and passion surrounding family history is the quest of discovering who their ancestors really were. What did my great-great-grandfather think of farming? How did my great-great-grandmother nurture a family in such brutal surroundings?

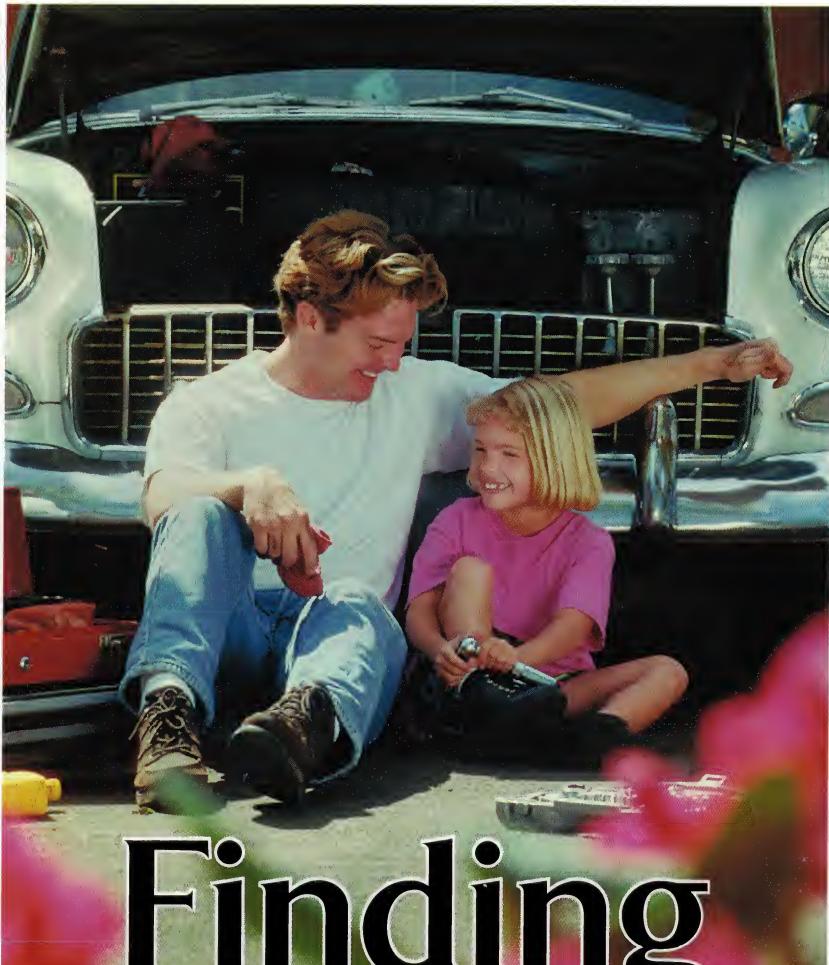
Deep inside each of us is a quest to hear our ancestors' voices—the voices of family members from near and far, both in distance and time. Fortunately, projects that take advantage of today's technological advancements are providing us with opportunities to find and hear some of these voices.

One of the most consistent methods of discovering the voices of your ancestors captured in digital archives around the country is to explore the websites of libraries, archives, and historical societies in the specific geographic locale where your research has lead you. Then investigate the websites of state libraries, state archives, and state historical societies in the state of your research interest; and never forget the riches of the Library of Congress.

An example is the Library of Congress's *Veterans History Project*, which contains a collection of stories of twentieth-century military veterans of the United States. Interviews, diaries, letters, memoirs, stories, photographs, and other memorabilia of veterans are being collected, preserved, and digitally copied and shared over the Internet.

You could spend hours exploring the website where this content is located <[www.loc.gov/vets/](http://www.loc.gov/vets/)>. Plus, the site offers a useful set of resources for anyone interested in working with a twentieth-century veteran to capture his or her story. Tips are offered for both planning and conducting interviews (and these tips certainly apply to any oral history projects or family interviewing you may wish to do as well).

One of the most fantastic parts of the *Veterans History Project* site,

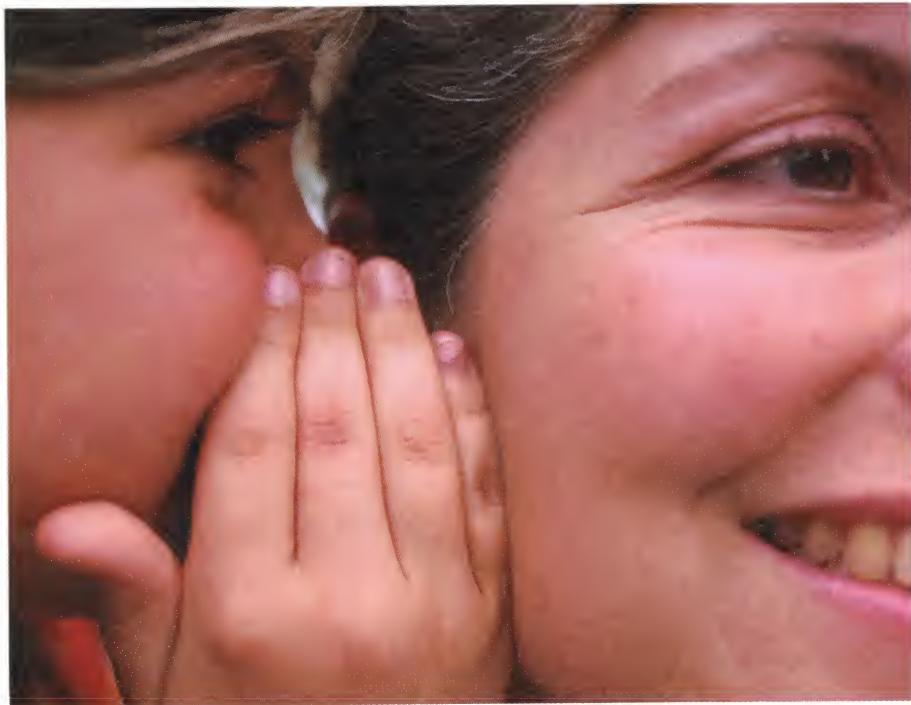


# Finding the Voices of Our Families

By Curt B. Witcher, MLS, FUGA

however, is the ability to search the site's database. You can search by combinations of descriptors including a particular surname, war, and branch of service as well as by highest rank, interviewer, and notes. This feature is a gateway to a collection of stories told in the first person and the documents that evidence the lives of the individuals whose stories are presented.

Searching under the name Wilkerson, for example, nets six results ranging from World War II to the Vietnam War, and includes individuals from the army, army air corps, and WAVES (Navy Women's Reserve). Individuals found through the database search are linked to their respective pages of collection information including dates of service, military engagement or war,



unit and location of service, highest rank achieved, and honors and awards, as well as the name of the interviewer and the original repository of the interview data and other collected information. Collections are housed at the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center.

If you find a veteran listed with a **View Digital Collection** button, that means some consequential number of materials for that particular veteran are available online—no trip to the American Folklife Center required. Selecting the View Digital Collection button for George Smith Wilkerson, for example, reveals the availability of a forty-four minute video recording of his interview, completely downloadable and viewable for free over the Web. You can watch George and listen to him tell, in his own words, what he was doing on 7 December 1941, how his training experiences were at Camp Campbell, when his unit's captain was captured, how weather and the supply of fuel affected his unit's ability to fight, and how his armored division moved about.

Exploring the database, you can uncover such a variety of materials—all voices from families across the country. Among family stories are eleven photographs and a sixteen-page typed manuscript of Sergeant Gunner W. F. Nice's 2nd Division, 49th Company in World War I; an audio tape and complete transcription of an interview with World War II navy aviation machinist William Sidney Armstrong; Vietnam veteran Roy William Smid's photograph and eleven-minute oral interview; and Persian Gulf War veteran Colonel Jayne H. Cooley's thirty-seven-minute video interview.

In addition to the personal histories and documents collected from veterans themselves, the Library of Congress is also interested in collecting, preserving, and making available personal histories from Americans who participated in home-front activities including USO workers; industrial laborers who made military vehicles, munitions, and other necessary wartime accoutrements; medical personnel in support of armed services actions; and civilian trainers and instructors of military personnel.

There are also a number of oral history initiatives that are being conducted or have been engaged in at state and local levels. Humanities and Social Sciences Online, or H-Net (hosted by Michigan State University), is one of a number of places where researchers can find a listing of oral history projects by subject <[www.h-net.msu.edu/oralhist/projects.html](http://www.h-net.msu.edu/oralhist/projects.html)>. Among the projects listed is the Barrios Oral History Project focusing on Hispanic communities of Tempe, a number of international projects, and the Institute of American Indian Studies' projects at the South Dakota Oral History Center.

## Reaping the Rewards of Experience

While it is extremely rewarding to listen to family members tell their stories in their own words, it can be equally satisfying to experience family members and ancestors through their written words. Technology has opened the door for everyday researchers to access these collections as well, like those available through the Library of Congress's *American Memory Project* <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>>.

The *American Memory Project* provides free access to some of the vast digital archives of the Library of Congress, including more than 9 million digital images in more than one hundred collections that document the history and culture of the United States. Among these collections, researchers can find the words of ordinary Americans in both interview transcripts and digitized copies of letters and diaries.

"Prairie Settlement: Nebraska Photographs and Family Letters, 1862–1912" is one such collection. Three hundred and eighteen letters of the

# While it is extremely rewarding to listen to family members tell their stories in their own words, it can be equally satisfying to experience family members and ancestors through their written words.

Uriah W. Oblinger family, containing nearly three thousand pages, have been both transcribed and digitized. The Oblinger family homesteaded in Nebraska from Indiana in 1873, and the letters are filled with all the excitement, joy, longing, disappointment, hardships, and successes that you'd expect of a poor pioneering family. It is so consequential to read about life's ups and downs in a person's own words, but to see the actual handwritten documents and observe how family members saved paper by writing across a single sheet in two different directions is nearly golden.

A benefit of having original documents transcribed is that the researcher can use the Find feature of a web browser or software program to search for names, dates, organizations, and events within the document. Remember, however, that this ability to quickly navigate through a document should never replace exploring written sources to ensure faithful and complete transcriptions.

Technology is enabling historical societies, libraries, and archives all across North America and the world to provide researchers with access to letters and diaries from yesteryear. Wonderfully, it is not just the moneyed, landed, and well-connected whose voices have been preserved and shared. The voices of everyday people—families that struggled to survive, individuals who served three-year tours as privates, and men and women who just wanted to make a

difference in the lives of their fellow Americans—are so frequently a part of these collections. And if you look and listen, you may be surprised to find that the voices of your own ancestors can often be heard. ↗

*Curt B. Witcher, MLS, FUGA, is the Historical Genealogy Department Manager at the Allen County Public Library and a former president of both the Federation of Genealogical Societies and the National Genealogical Society.*

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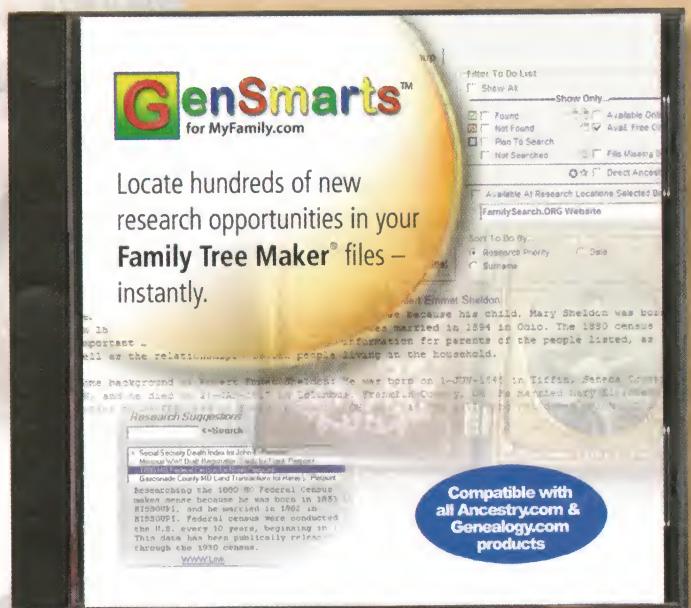
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When you view a census schedule, you might see it as a handy genealogical record; in truth, however, the census has served a much greater purpose. That census schedule is the reason for the development of punch cards, sorters, and computers, as well as an example of an experiment in democratic government that continues to this day.

### The census as an engine for innovation

You probably already know that the U.S. Constitution calls for a census. But did you know that the Articles of Confederation—the agreement under which the country was governed between 1776 and 1789—called for a census to be taken every three years? Or that due to the War for Independence, no census was ever taken during that period?

So the U.S. Constitution, which was signed in 1787, mandated that the first census be taken within three years, and subsequently every ten years thereafter. Enumeration of the first five censuses was handled by assistants to U.S. Marshals. The Secretary of State reported the totals.

Beginning in 1850, a temporary census bureau was created in Washington. The census schedules were sent from the enumeration districts to this office where they were processed, by hand, into tick mark tallies.

The 1850 census tallies for age, race, sex, and so on, were conducted in this manner, but it was very laborious; the data was gathered easily enough, but processing it was painstaking. It got so bad that the 1880 census took

**THE CENSUS  
MADE ME DO IT**

By Beau Sharbrough

nine years to complete—the so-called “Crisis of the 1880 Census.”

A former census bureau employee, Herman Hollerith, thought he could come up with a better way to tally the census. After experimenting with paper tape, he hit on the idea of using holes punched in cards to speed the process.

Hollerith got his idea from train tickets. You've probably seen any number of Westerns where passengers sit in the train cars, and the conductor comes through and asks for their tickets, punching each card with a device

in his hand. You might have thought, as I did, that he was just canceling them so they couldn't be used again. But actually, at the time, there was a problem with people stealing other people's tickets, so train conductors would punch holes in different places along the edge of the cards in ways that identified the physical characteristics of a ticket holder, such as hair color and eye color.

Well, Hollerith thought, if enumerators could punch the information from the census schedules into cards, machines developed by Hollerith's

# The census has always played a powerful role in the relationship between the federal government and the states, and among the states themselves.

company, the Tabulating Machine Company, could be used to tally the totals faster. Hollerith eventually won the bid to perform the data processing for the 1890 census, and he rented his tabulating machines to the government for the princely sum of \$750,000.

Hollerith's plan worked. A preliminary count of the 1890 census was produced in six weeks. I don't mean to imply that everyone loved it. In fact, the first reaction that people had was that the numbers were wrong—the 1890 census included twice as many citizens as the 1870 census, and was finished in less time than the 1880 census. But it initiated an era of mechanical innovation that lasted sixty years. As for Hollerith, in 1911 his company merged with three other companies—International Time Recording Company, Bundy Manufacturing, and Computing Scale of America—to become Computing Tabulating Recording Company. In 1924 the name was changed to International Business Machines, or IBM. Perhaps you've heard of it.

In 1946, the census bureau was once again swamped with paperwork, and the 1950 census was looming ahead on the calendar. So desperate was the conservative census bureau that it signed a contract with inventors J. Presper Eckert and John Mauchly for something that didn't exist yet—a Universal Automatic Computer, or UNIVAC. Another government agency, the defense department, already had a computer call the ENIAC, but the ENIAC had manual programming that took weeks or months to change, and it was much slower than the UNIVAC promised to be.

There were plenty of critics who thought the UNIVAC would never be built, and as deadlines slipped and costs mounted, it looked like these critics might be right. Eckert and Mauchly were in a financial bind and needed a "white knight" to bail them out. They finally found one in razor blade manufacturer Remington Rand, Inc., which bought the Eckert-Mauchly Computer Company and put up the money to complete the UNIVAC. In March 1951, the U.S. Census Bureau took delivery of the first commercially available computer in history, the UNIVAC I.

## Why do we have a census?

While the census has been an engine of technological development and an application of the old adage, "Necessity is the mother of invention," I still have to ask why. Personally, I'm a very lazy man, and I don't think that every crisis has to be met. So why do we have a census? And why does it matter that the census be completed in a timely manner?

For the answers to these questions, we have to understand the mindset of the framers of the Constitution, who attempted to devise a structure containing checks and balances. They believed that people tended to overdo things, especially things like power, so they designed the structure of the republic to remain stable under opposing natural forces. The census is just one of their balancing acts.

The government needed to know how many people lived in each state in order to apportion representation in the House, but there were concerns that states might get gummy with the

numbers in order to seek a legislative advantage. The framers also thought to base the collection of taxes from the states on population figures—direct taxation—reasoning that states would not want to pay extra taxes in order to gain extra representation. Thus the census was constructed.

In an example of how well-intentioned plans often just don't work out, this form of direct taxation has rarely been used and is not considered practical. Further, until 1920 it was common to see new House seats created for growing populations, but not common to see seats taken away from regions that lost people. And, prophetically, today we see states sue the federal government over the census in an attempt to increase their representation—without the certainty that they would be taxed more heavily by the federal government if their cases succeed.

## Census politics

It's all a matter of "census politics." In an effort to understand the people in the country, we ask the census bureau to provide more than just numbers of people. We want statistics about those people. We want demographic categories.

The number of census questions grew from six in 1790, to seventy in 1840. The 1890 census included over 13,000 questions, with forty-five pertaining to population. Today we have a short form and a long form, the latter of which is somewhere around ten pages.

Census questions have, at times, been misused. Early in the nineteenth century, persons in the South wrongly

claimed that the incidence of insanity reported in the census for African Americans in the North was proof that African Americans couldn't handle citizenship. And suspicions that census data in general was being reported incorrectly resulted in the change from a "head of household" to an "every name" census schedule in 1850.

More recently, the accuracy of the census and the resulting representation of groups thought to be undercounted has again been in the news. The 1990 census was the first census to be deemed "less accurate" than those before it. Different groups sued to have sampling adjustments correct numbers that would be used to apportion representation in the House. One case made it to the Supreme Court, which ruled in 1999 that sampling is not permissible for purposes of apportionment in the House (sampling could, however, be used for other purposes). As the Government Accountability Office (GAO) said, "The debate over how best to meet the constitutional objective of representative government continues today, with the census still at the core of the debate."

## What privacy?

The founders might have quailed at identifying a man's property for the census. A simple count of the persons in a house was sufficient for their purposes. They were aware that a king could use a list like the Doomsday Book (so-called because giving the king a list of who has how many cows was seen by some as doomsday for English freedom) to send beefy guys with sharp pointed objects to take property away from people. The founders opted for a simple count and posted the census in public places so that residents could offer corrections.

In 1880, however, the year that my grandfather's grandfather James Sharbrough enumerated his home district in Mississippi, enumerators were finally forced to swear an oath

not to reveal census information to others (although I'm sure James was an accomplished swearer before that, having served in the Mississippi infantry during the war between the states). Still, in 1917, the census bureau provided the names of potential draftees to the government.

The open nature of the census bureau finally began to change during the 1920s. By 1942, the census bureau refused to provide the War Department with names and addresses of U.S. residents of Japanese descent.

But it wasn't until 1954 that the law providing for a seventy-two year waiting period for access to information in the National Archives—where census records ultimately reside—was enacted. Now, until census records are turned over to the National Archives, people can request copies of their own reports. After census records reach the National Archives, people have to wait seventy-two years to access the records again.

## So, why does any of this matter to me?

The census has always played a powerful role in the relationship between the federal government and the states, and among the states themselves. So the next time you turn on your personal computer and view an online census schedule, remember that what you're looking at is more than just a handy genealogical record. That census record was also a great engine of technological development, as well as an example of an experiment in democratic government that continues to this day. ☺

*Beau Sharbrough is a Senior Product Manager at Ancestry.com. He is a noted speaker and writer on topics relating genealogy and technology. His genealogy website is <[www.rootworks.com](http://www.rootworks.com)>.*

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# Breakthrough

Like many American families, especially the ones who "went West" to settle wild and woolly frontiers, if you give the family tree a hard shake it's likely a few scoundrels will fall out.

My own tree had several, but the one who most intrigued me as a child was *The Outlaw*. That was all that the old folks ever called him. They would cluck their tongues, shake their heads, and then change the subject whenever we children were around.

Years later when I decided to see if I could prove or disprove the family legend, I asked my older sister about *The Outlaw* (she always knew everything). She told me his name was Cole Shoemake. Then she confessed that she didn't know any details about him nor exactly how we were related.

Thus began a search that has extended across many years and into diverse records. I started in my hometown's library where extracts from old newspaper accounts of the Muskogee (Oklahoma) *Daily Phoenix* revealed:

- 6 June 1918. *Cole Shoemake, escaped convict, and Bert Wechammer, robbed a poker game near Webbers Falls of \$200, and escaped the home of Henry Starr, near Porum from which they later made a ride for life from officers' bullets.*
- 8 July 1919. *Cole Shoemake, who terrorized eastern Oklahoma as a bandit, was made a widower [sic] when his wife received a divorce. Shoemake is now serving time in McAlester prison. His partner, Dave Smith, was killed by a posse.*
- 14 June 1920. *Cole Shoemake, Oklahoma outlaw, surrendered to officers near Kinta. After being handcuffed he was shot in the back and killed in a cowardly manner by Norris Cooper, city marshal at Kinta.*
- 15 June 1920. *Oklahoma Outlaw Is Shot in Back. The killing of [Cole] Shoemake ended one of the most checkered criminal careers led by any man since the days of Al Jennings and*

By Myra Vanderpool Gormley, CG



## WANTED! ON THE TRAIL OF AN OUTLAW

other gang leaders. Never working with more than one or two companions, Shoemake is accredited with nearly every crime known to the statutes except murder. He has stopped just short of this on several occasions. Jails and other means of confinement seemed not built for Shoemake. He escaped from imprisonment several times. Held in the county jail here [Muskogee] ready to be taken to the penitentiary to serve eight years for burglary, Shoemake made his escape in April 1915, after assaulting two

jailers and staging a running fight with the police and deputy sheriffs. Shoemake finally recaptured, was sent to Granite [Greer County, Oklahoma] where he escaped from the road gang. He had surrendered to his uncle, Dick Shoemake, one of the county's deputy sheriffs. Returned to the penitentiary, he was released about Christmas of last year. Beginning his criminal life again, his arrest by Poteau officers was the next development.

- 18 June 1920. Hearings started at Stigler [Haskell County, Oklahoma]

*for Norris Cooper, city marshal of Kinta, for the killing of Cole Shoemake, outlaw, after Shoemake had surrendered and was handcuffed.*

- 19 June 1920. Under the headline of "Bandit's Slayer Held for Murder," the newspaper account says that Norris Cooper, former city marshal of Kinta, Oklahoma, is charged with the killing of Cole Shoemake, notorious Oklahoma bandit, who was captured Sunday afternoon by posse after an exchange of fifty shots. The evidence brought out by the state at the hearing indicated that the shooting of Shoemake by Cooper was the culmination of a threat made by Cooper against Shoemake two weeks previous when Shoemake with Walter Childers, fellow bandit, held up and robbed a poker game in which Cooper was a participant. It was alleged by the state that Shoemake struck Cooper over the head with a gun, and that Cooper told Shoemake to 'go ahead and kill me because if you don't I'll get you.' Held in Poteau jail on a burglary charge, Shoemake broke jail three weeks ago, accompanied by Walter Childers. With the officers from two counties hunting for him, he and Childers were finally run to earth near Kinta Sunday. Refusing to surrender, Shoemake and Childers fought the posse for two hours—when their ammunition gave out they surrendered.

No wonder the old folks clucked their tongues.

### **SO HOW DID COLE SHOEMAKE, THE OUTLAW, FIT INTO OUR FAMILY TREE?**

Since he was killed by a law-enforcement officer while in custody in 1920, presumably there was an official Oklahoma death certificate for him, and, with hope, it would provide the names of his parents. However, several requests to the Oklahoma state vital records office with variant spellings of his name all turned up negative results.

Many members of our Shoemake family are buried in Fields Cemetery (also known as Starvilla), which is located near Porum, Muskogee County, Oklahoma, but no marked grave for Cole Shoemake was found.

Marriage records at the courthouse in Muskogee show that Cole married Daisy Emma Hulse in 1912, but they were divorced at the time of his death, at least according to one newspaper article.

In the 1920 federal census, Cole Shoemake is in LeFlore County, Oklahoma—in jail. When initial searches for Cole turned up negative in the 1910 Oklahoma and the 1900 Indian Territory censuses, it became apparent there was not going to be an easy way to identify his parents. Likely Cole would have been enumerated with one or both of them or with other family members in 1900 as a boy of about fourteen years of age, assuming his age given in 1920 census was correct.

Cole's two marriage applications in 1911 and 1912 (both to Daisy Hulse) in Muskogee County gave no indication as to his parentage. On the 1 October 1911 marriage license application, the age of Cole is given as twenty-one. Nine months later, on 30 June 1912, their second marriage license application lists his age as twenty-five. (Why two marriage licenses? Evidently Daisy was a bit under age at the time of the first application, though she claimed to be eighteen—one is left to speculate about what happened in 1911.)

Based upon the 1920 census and the two marriage applications, Cole was born anywhere from about 1885 to 1890. The Five Civilized Tribes (sovereign nations) of Indian Territory did not issue birth certificates, so unless there was a birth announcement published in a local newspaper, finding a birth record was not likely. Births were not routinely published in any of the early newspapers in the Cherokee or Creek Nations of Indian Territory. To add to the quandary, it was not

known whether Cole was even born in Indian Territory; however, since our Shoemake family was mixed-blood Cherokee and lived in the Canadian District of the Cherokee Nation, logic suggested that was where he was born. Moreover, the newspaper reference to his uncle, Dick Shoemake, a Muskogee County deputy sheriff, firmly linked Cole to our family.

**IT WAS ALLEGED**

**BY THE STATE THAT**

**SHOEMAKE STRUCK**

**COOPER OVER THE**

**HEAD WITH A GUN, AND**

**THAT COOPER TOLD**

**SHOEMAKE TO "GO**

**AHEAD AND KILL ME**

**BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T**

**I'LL GET YOU."**

**WHEN A FRIEND MENTIONED THAT THE EARLY PRISON RECORDS OF**

**LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS WERE GOING TO BE MADE AVAILABLE ONLINE**

**AT ROOTSWEB.COM, I DECIDED TO SEE WHAT I COULD FIND IN THEM.**

**ONE DAY I BLITHELY TYPED IN SHOEMAKE. . . . THERE HE WAS.**

Genealogical records for people whose ancestors resided in what was one of America's last frontiers—Indian Territory in the time period of 1880 until 1907 when it became part of the State of Oklahoma—are scant to say the least, particularly for white and mixed-blood families. Our great-great-grandfather, William Henderson Shoemake, was a mixed-blood Cherokee. In 1883 he was officially readmitted to the rolls of the Cherokee Nation. In 1908 he died in Muskogee County, Oklahoma. His probate records, finalized in April 1910, named his eight children, his surviving wife, and his two grandchildren—Coleman Shoemake and Lela Shoemake. These papers show that Lela Shoemake, age twenty-three, was living at Howe, Oklahoma, and Coleman Shoemake, age twenty, whose residence was "in prison."

My first thought was "in prison—where?" Oklahoma was a new state at that time, and its first state prison, located in McAlester, Pittsburg County, didn't open until October 1908, but in the 1910 census, Shoemake wasn't listed there. So where was he?

His grandfather's 1910 probate records said "prison," not jail. A nebulous clue in the history of Oklahoma prisons divulged that during its territorial days, Oklahoma sent its prisoners to the Kansas Penitentiary at Lansing in Leavenworth County. When the 1910

census finally was every-name indexed, success at locating *The Outlaw* came. Had I thought to look in Kansas, I might have found him sooner as it is one of the states that had a Miracode or Soundex index for that year, but that's hindsight.

In the 1910 census, Cole is shown as a twenty-four-year-old prisoner at this U.S. penitentiary, born in Oklahoma (father born in Oklahoma and mother born in Mississippi). Just to add to the confusion, he is shown as "white," which is not uncommon for mixed-bloods, especially for one who was probably less than one-sixteenth Cherokee.

Luck often plays a part in our genealogical research. When a friend mentioned that the early prison records of Leavenworth, Kansas, were going to be made available online at RootsWeb.com (thanks to the work of the staff and volunteers of the Central Plains Region, National Archives in Kansas City), I decided to see what I could find in them. Many genealogists joke about finding a horsethief in the family, but the possibility was quickly becoming less remote than I had originally thought.

One day I blithely typed in Shoemake at <<http://userdb.rootsweb.com/groups/>> and selected the Leavenworth Prison records. There he was. I learned that it was a civilian (rather than military) case with a 1905 date and that the jurisdiction was Indian

Territory and the offense was larceny (horse stealing). I also found a record number and, under Photograph, a label of "true," meaning there was a photo available.

I wrote to the National Archives in Kansas City for the file and picture. Ten dollars and two weeks later, I received the case file—a goldmine including a pleading letter to the warden from Cole's maternal aunt Alice Matthews asking for Cole's release and explaining how Cole was an orphan, having lost both parents at a tender age. The file also included the names of the people who had written to Cole, their relationships to him, and the post office, state, and date from which their letters to Cole were mailed, as well as his prison photo [image on page 62].

Armed with the names of his relatives and their whereabouts in the 1905 to 1910 time frame, a search in census records helped throw additional light on *The Outlaw*. However, tossed in was some frustration, too, as I couldn't find a number of individuals, particularly Cole's sister, Lela, who has disappeared without a trace. She evidently had married at least twice, but her trail in Oklahoma went cold.

The availability of the World War I Draft Registration shed more details on Cole Shoemake. There he was, registered on 12 September 1918, an inmate in the Oklahoma State Reformatory in Granite, Greer County,

Oklahoma. His birth date is recorded as 7 April 1885, and his nearest relative was his wife, Daisy Shoemake. His physical description was given as tall, slender, with blue eyes and black hair.

Eventually a search in the Dawes Rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes turned up a gold mine of genealogical data on Cole's grandfather's entire family and divulged more information about *The Outlaw*, whose full name was Eddy Coleman Shoemake. This in turn enabled me to identify his parents and all four grandparents and ascertain that technically he was a half first cousin, twice removed.

Cole's father, William C. C. Shoemake, was the only child by the first wife of William Henderson Shoemake, and he died before Cole was three years old. Cole's mother, Viola Windham, remarried in 1889 and had four children by her second husband before she died sometime between 1897 and 1900. Cole was orphaned by the time he was fifteen, and the Indian Territory in the early 1900s was a wild place in which to grow up.

Like many genealogical trails we explore, finding some answers often leads to more questions and mysteries. And, so, I'm back on the hunt, this time for *The Outlaw's* sister—to find out where she disappeared to and what happened to her in the Oklahoma hills of the early twentieth century. ↗

*Myra Vanderpool Gormley is a certified genealogist and the editor of RootsWeb Review <<http://newsletters.rootsweb.com>>. She is a retired syndicated columnist and feature writer for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. In her spare time, she traces her illustrious ancestors and prunes the others.*

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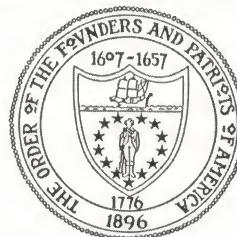
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## Won't You Be My Neighbor?

by Marilyn Carlson



**T**here is an old saying in real estate—the three most important things about a home are location, location, location. The same holds true in genealogy.

Over the years, I have learned the value of networking with other genealogists who share my location, location, location interests. For example, my maiden name is Munk, and I have a number of Munk ancestors on the island of Bornholm in Denmark. Early on, my research indicated that my ancestors lived on one of three Munkegaarders (farms named Munk).

This left me with the question: did my ancestors get their Munk name from the farms, or did the farms get their names from my Munk ancestors? I posted a message on a bulletin board to find out.

I received one reply, from a man named Børge in Copenhagen who told me that his wife's grandmother was also a Munk from Bornholm. It turned out Børge didn't know the answer to my farm question, but he did want to compare notes to see if we were related.

So instead of finding out where the Munk name originated, I exchanged family histories via e-mail. The exchange netted both Børge and me more

information about our connected families, but with no astounding new finds for either of us.

Børge helped me by researching a few of my elusive ancestors with, unfortunately, little more success than I'd had. Then, almost as an aside, Børge asked me if I knew about Kure's farm index. I told him I'd never heard of it.

I knew that farms were traditionally handed down through generations of the same family in Denmark, but what I didn't know was that a man named Kure made it his life's work to index all of the farms on Bornholm. Included in Kure's index were the names of people, parishes, farms, and how and when farms changed hands over the years, as well as vital dates, places, and relationships associated with the families who lived on the farms.

Børge scanned and sent me pages from the farm index of the farms I was interested in—about 110 in all. Each page either listed my own ancestors or showed that the people on that farm weren't members of my family. Occasionally the list has also provided me with two or four more generations on some of my other lines.

Kure's farm index hasn't been microfilmed or added to any other collection; in fact, there are only two existing copies of the record—one in Copenhagen and one on Bornholm. And it's nothing to look at, just a typed manuscript, albeit a very large one, with one carbon copy. It's something I may have never known about had Børge not told me, but it has turned into an invaluable resource in my family history research ever since.

In the past ten years, I've made a

number of inquiries on bulletin boards, via e-mails, and on websites. Because of these, I've found an index of rural probate records and extracts from those probates, listings of farm names and numbers by parish, a large database based on one of my surnames, other databases containing information about my ancestors (from no fewer than four prolific researchers), and English translations from Danish family histories.

Each of these records has something in common: they are small collections compiled by individuals. While the composite of these secondary sources may look like a little shack compared to a large repository, to me, they comprise a mansion that, ten years later, I am still exploring with delight.

My experience with neighborly family historians has taught me the importance of keeping in touch with other genealogists whose interests connect to mine. Today I have a list of about twenty Danish hobbyists I've yet to meet face-to-face. Some of them have volunteered to translate Danish to English, others to perform searches. And they've all helped me in any number of unique ways, just because we share the same genealogical neighborhood.

None of us is in this alone. For every ancestor we seek, someone else somewhere else has probably already been down that road, taken an alternate route, or even looked at the house next door. Just because you're given advice, that doesn't mean you have to take it. But it never hurts to go down that road, open the door, and have a look around. Especially if you like the location. ☐

*Marilyn Carlson has been pursuing her own family history for nearly thirty-five years and has been a professional genealogist specializing Danish and U.S. research since the early 1980s. She can be reached at m840@hotmail.com.*

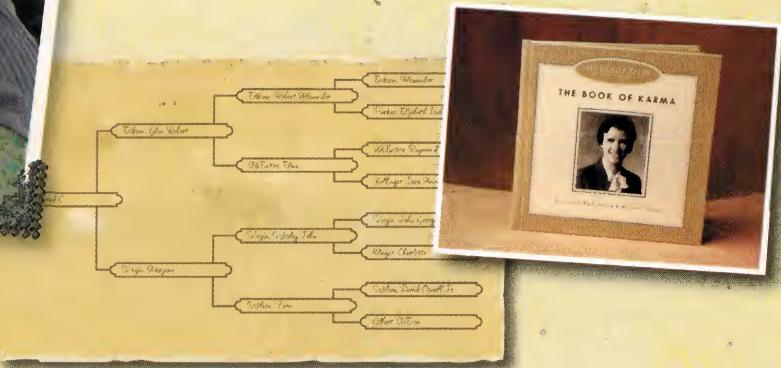
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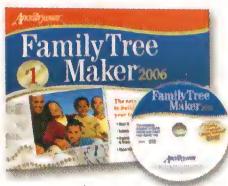
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